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REV. PEYTON

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PG. 25

IMA BUSTED!

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PG. 18

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ADOPT-A-POTHOLE PROGRAM TAKES CITY BY STORM

In a groundbreaking exposé NUVO's Jim Poyser examines the gripping story of Linda Salmon, her beloved Basset Hound and the pothole that swallowed the dog whole. In the aftermath of the tragedy, Salmon's inspiring idea to commemorate the pothole has led to a movement that is sweeping the nation.

BY JIM POYSER
COVER PHOTO BY CHARLIE CLARK AND STEPHEN SIMONETTO



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BUTLER BULLDOGS HEAD TO THE FINAL FOUR

Captivating fans all over the country, the Bulldogs blew apart brackets and came up from behind this season. They'll meet VCU on the court this Saturday. NUVO's leading sports analyst Andrew Roberts breaks it down for us, explaining how Butler stacks up against their opponents and what they've done differently to get to this surprising point.

BY ANDREW ROBERTS

arts 18

CERAMICS, SPRAY PAINT AND 3D PRINTING

NUVO sat down with ceramicist Malcolm Mobutu Smith to talk about his upcoming show, inspirations and journey as an artist. Smith's show, *Inner City Inspirations: An Artist's Evolution in Clay*, will be at iMOCA from April 1 to May 14.

BY DAN GROSSMAN

food 23

AL BASHA ADDS HEAT TO MEDITERRANEAN FARE

Occupying a prime piece of Broad Ripple real estate, Al Basha offers quick and affordable lunch and dinner options with a kick.

BY DAVID HOPPE

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THE ELEPHANT IN THE LIVING ROOM

Mike Webber's intelligent documentary tactfully examines the two opposing sides of the debate concerning the legality of owning exotic animals as pets, using clever graphics alongside heartfelt conversations to move the plot along. *The Elephant in the Living Room* premieres at the RAVE on Friday, April 1.

BY DERRICK CARNES

nuvo.net



/PHOTO

Slideshow: HorrorHound Weekend 2011
by Charlie Clark



/ARTICLES

Manic Panic: Your enviro-PANiQuiz
by Jim Poyser
House Democrats return to Statehouse
by Megan Banta
City honors sustainability initiatives
by Keelee Hurlburt



/ARTICLES (cont.)

Voter registration deadline looms
by Catherine Green
Your A&E best bets, March 30 - April 6
by Jim Poyser
Roots/Rock: Cody Canada, Jason Heath album
by Rob Nichols
The Acoustic LIVE Challenge - Week two
by Danielle Look
Sensu's grand opening by Danielle Look

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BUTLER UNIVERSITY SPOTLIGHT EVENTS

Wednesday, March 30

Butler Baseball vs. Wabash*
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Sunday, April 3

Wind Ensemble Concert*
3 p.m., Clowes Memorial Hall

Tuesday, April 5

Butler Men's Tennis vs. Ball State*
3 p.m., Tennis Bubble

Percussion Ensemble Concert*
7:30 p.m., Clowes Memorial Hall

Wednesday, April 6

Butler Baseball vs. Purdue*
3 p.m., Bulldog Park

Saturday, April 9

Butler Men's Tennis vs. Youngstown State*
10 a.m., Tennis Bubble

Butler Softball vs. Cleveland State*
1 and 3 p.m., Softball Field

Butler Women's Tennis vs. Youngstown State*
2 p.m., Tennis Bubble

Clowes Presents

Joffrey Ballet
8 p.m., Clowes Memorial Hall
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Sunday, April 10

Butler Men's Tennis vs. Cleveland State*
10 a.m., Tennis Bubble

Butler Softball vs. Cleveland State*
Noon, Softball Field

Butler Women's Tennis vs. Cleveland State*
2 p.m., Tennis Bubble

Butler Symphony Orchestra and Choral Department Concert*
3 p.m., Clowes Memorial Hall

Tuesday, April 12

Butler Men's Tennis vs. Wright State*
3 p.m., Tennis Bubble

Butler Softball vs. Valparaiso*
3 and 5 p.m., Softball Field

Faculty Artist Series
Guest Artist Jamie Aebersold, Jazz Saxophone*
7:30 p.m., Robertson Hall, Eidson-Duckwall Recital Hall



Tuesday, April 12
The Vivian S. Delbrook Visiting Writers Series*

Richard Russo
7:30 p.m., Atherton Union, Reilly Room

*Free of charge, no ticket required



For the latest on Butler University's events visit www.butler.edu.

LETTERS

Lessons from Japan

I don't know who Hunter S. Thompson is, but I will have to study him since Mr. Hammer mentioned him in his column this week ("The strangest time in history?" Hammer, March 23-30). I am at fault not knowing who this man is. I do hope, however, that Hunter lived a relatively long life before he took it, and had a chance to smell some of his own rotten farts.

I will speculate that the Japan disaster won't be enough to convince our U.S. government experts that a nuclear reactor built on a seismic fault line is a mistake. America and the world could do absolute honor to the Japanese people if the lessons learned from their earthquake and tsunami are heeded. The Internet boasts today that a U.S. aircraft carrier is contaminated. It is no doubt Californians fear the worst not from Japan but that the next big one might occur along the San Andreas.

I have a sister who lives in the Marin area in Tiburon. I believe my sister knows the threat of earthquake. She and her husband and their children all live around the San Francisco area. They never mention natural disaster until one actually happens. It is kind of like Congresswoman Giffords' husband wanting his last flight in space on the shuttle, even though if his life was lost by some tragedy, Gabrielle would finish her life without him. These are testaments of human behavior, which exemplify the human spirit to bear all odds and risk everything. You can ask, will America continue to allow its nuclear facilities to function that have been constructed on ground high in risk of the power of Mother Nature?

George Dresbach
INDIANAPOLIS

Collective sanity

Any thoughtful person, over the how-ever-many-years, would have the same thought as you put in the lead paragraph ("Legislative walk-outs: The system is busted," Hoppe, March 9-16). There was no difference. As I used to say, "different sides of the same coin."

Now, the Republicans, whatever their reason, are again taking on the aspect of "union-busters." In a former day, unions rose to provide a voice to the real concerns of labor, who, without a common voice, had no voice. Then, with political power, union leaders became politicians.

Politics was no longer the tool, but the prize... access to personal power, not as a necessity to address the concerns of labor. Unions became too powerful... the tail wagging the dog, all but indistinguishable from those, who at one time, had sought to have some equitable recognition from, at the bargaining table.

It can easily appear a crazy mixed-up world.

Truth is, what turns around comes around. He who is first today will, someday be last. On and on.

Today, the federal and state political representatives have a real problem. We are, as a federal government, or singularly as state governments, amassing debt which has contributed to our fiscal undoing, and, if it continues, will surely bring about our demise on a global scale. China already all but owns us... Nevertheless, to call for the end of state employee unions, as collective bargaining agents, is not the, or an, answer to the problem.

The answer is to be found in our collective sanity. Clearly, something we are unable to grasp as a society. What is most telling is the mixed-bag public response to this state employee union-busting effort. Clearly, unions have their place. In today's world, and to the political chagrin of many politicians, union-busting is not only unpopular, but not recognized as the answer, or even the beginning of an answer. I could go on, but I've other problems to deal with at the moment. These are difficult times.

Mike Ehmer
INDIANAPOLIS

A call for philanthropy

I'll give you half-credit for this week's column ("Rahm Emanuel talks the arts," Hoppe, March 16-23). Interesting story, but the subtext of whining for Indianapolis to spend more taxpayer money on the arts when it can't even pay its bills is a little too obvious. Surely there must be some wealthy patrons of the arts in Indianapolis who would love to organize an effort to give the city a little class.

Posted by "hannamel54"
COMMENT ON NUVO.NET

Old news war machine

I just came upon an interesting book on the "war machine," published back in the '30s by a man approached by leading industrialists to start a fascist coup against FDR ("Peace according to Bill Ayers," News, March 23-30). Of course it never happened, but the fact that it was contemplated by men with power is scary. Another "left-wing radical" warned us about the same war machine years later — Eisenhower in his farewell speech. I have read about this sort of thing going back to Reconstruction after the Civil War and the Tucson Ring in Arizona during the Apache Wars. It's nothing new. We just don't want to deal with it as a nation.

Posted by "Inspired Stranger"
COMMENT ON NUVO.NET



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HAMMER



Tween-pop or Marxist propaganda? Deciphering Rebecca Black's 'Friday'

BY STEVE HAMMER
 SHAMMER@NUVO.NET

The song "Friday" by 13-year-old Rebecca Black has become the most unlikely hit record in quite some time. Originally conceived as a vanity project financed by Ms. Black's parents, it's been viewed 50 million times on YouTube and has been the subject of much derision by music critics and the public alike.

Last week, I received a call from an old friend in the music business in Los Angeles. My friend, in addition to producing hit songs for a variety of artists, has also served for many years as an analyst in the U.S. Department of State, specializing in communist studies.

He said that critics of the song had missed the point entirely. He said that instead of a cute, tween-pop ditty, "Friday" is the most cleverly produced and most blatantly pro-Marxist piece of music since The Clash released the rabble-rousing album *Sandinista!* 30 years ago.

While there's no way to prove my friend's theory, he believes the song was originally written back in the 1980s by the propaganda division of the Soviet Union's government. "This song is poisonous," he said. "It's basically *The Communist Manifesto* set to music."

An exposition of the song's lyrics seems to bolster this theory. Only by analyzing the song line by line, he said, is its true meaning revealed.

The song begins, *Seven a.m., waking up in the morning/Gotta be fresh, gotta go downstairs*. This line is an homage to The Clash's proletariat anthem "The Magnificent Seven," whose first line is about a worker arising at 7 a.m. to please his capitalist bosses.

The next lines: *Gotta have my bowl, gotta have cereal*. This refers to the grain shortages in pre-World War II Soviet Russia, in which nearly 5 million people starved due to a lack of wheat.

It continues: *Seein' everything, the time is goin'/Tickin' on and on, everybody's rushin'*. The last section refers to the impatience of the Bolsheviks after the 1917 Revolution and the provisional government's urgency in equating Russian nationalism with the Communist Party's aims. "Everybody's Russian," urged pro-Communist posters of the era.

The next lines are, *Gotta get down to the bus stop/Gotta catch my bus, I see my friends*. This references the lack of trans-

portation infrastructure in the Khrushchev era and touts the benefits of communal life.

Then we hit the plaintive lines, *Kickin' in the front seat/Sittin' in the back seat/Gotta make my mind up/Which seat can I take?* This is a direct reference to the indecision facing the Soviet Union after it scrambled to reassemble its government following the death of dictator Joseph Stalin.

Should the Soviets try to lead a world-wide revolution of workers in forcing an end to capitalism, or take the "back seat" of a more indirect approach?

In this, Ms. Black echoes the questions that preoccupied Khrushchev, Malenkov and Beria in 1953, and for that matter, Chinese leader Mao Zedong.

Even the song's chorus alludes to the desire of the proletariat to be freed from the shackles of capitalism and its joy at even a short respite from its cruel overlords: *It's Friday, Friday/Gotta get down on Friday/Everybody's lookin' forward to the weekend, weekend*.

When the teenaged Ms. Black sings, *Partyin', partyin', yeah*, she's referring to the historic 20th Congress of the Communist Party in 1956, which, after years of denial, began the process of de-Stalinizing Russia and ending the cult of personality surrounding him.

The song's bridge, possibly the most criticized section of the song, is in fact an expres-

sion of confusion and despair faced by Cold War Soviet leaders, albeit well-disguised.

Yesterday was Thursday, Thursday/Today it is Friday, Friday. This shows the importance of emphasizing the fruits of Soviet Communism relative to the era of the Tsar. But in anticipation of an uncertain future, the song reminds us that *Tomorrow*

is Saturday/And Sunday comes afterwards.

The Soviet Union continually issued optimistic forecasts of better days to come once the Revolution had been fully realized.

There are so many other Russian references in the song — the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the rise of Gorbachev — that my music business friend is convinced there is no possibility of coincidence.

"What I can't figure out," he told me, "is why it's out now. It has all the hallmarks of a psyops (psychological operations) campaign from the KGB circa 1985. Was the song stolen from Soviet archives? Had there been a sleeper cell sitting on this song awaiting orders that only now came? I can't figure it out."

He surmises that hardline Russians loyal to Vladimir Putin issued the song in an effort to reassert the power of the Russian state and its possible return to totalitarianism.

"But that's just my best guess," he said. "This is the kind of thing that makes me want to build a bomb shelter. Who knows what the Russians have up their sleeves next? Justin Bieber singing coded messages from Castro? The mind boggles at the possibilities." ■

"This... makes me want to build a bomb shelter."

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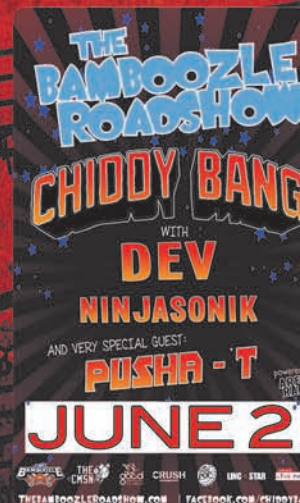
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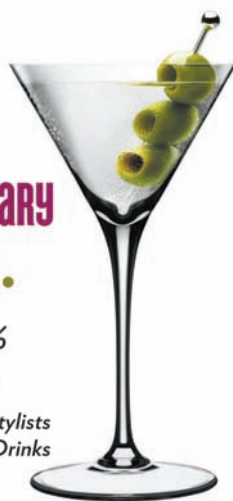
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HOPPE



Potholes & politics

We get what
we pay for

BY DAVID HOPPE
DHOPPE@NUVO.NET

These days it seems the whole world's apoplectic. As if fighting wars on two fronts weren't enough, we're lobbing missiles into Libya, people are getting blown up (again) in Israel and Japan's milk is radioactive.

Closer to home, the rich are getting richer while the rest of us are bankrupting the country. Apparently that's because we've got too many rights.

And did I mention that the glaciers are melting?

At a time when we are being ravaged by so much significance, it may seem beneath us to talk about something so commonplace as the state of Indianapolis' streets. But I was driving around downtown the other night; as usual, it was a teeth-rattling experience. So I'm going to say here what I've been muttering under my breath for years: our streets suck.

I'm not talking about the crews that have been out industriously patching potholes for the past few weeks. They — and Mayor Ballard's administration — deserve credit for making the city navigable.

But let's face it: the streets in this town are a mess. They're a patchy, cracked and coagulated mass of civic denial symbolizing Indianapolis' unwillingness to get the most basic things right.

It's ironic that a city known the world over for hosting "the greatest spectacle in racing" is so careless in maintaining its roadways. You'd think that a community as car-crazy as ours would insist on state-of-the-art paving. Then again, maybe this is a kind of safety measure, a way of holding everyone's inner Andretti at bay.

But keeping our streets up to par would cost money. A lot of money, given the incestuous relationship between the contractors who do the work and the politicians who arrange to pay for it. It seems resurfacing a city street is a little like trying to sign a free-agent football player: the amount you have to spend is bound to be more than it should be.

That may be OK if it wins you a championship, but it offends the Hoosier DNA when it comes to making civic improvements. Under these circumstances, we revert to our default mode and... do nothing.

Indeed, the inability to get our roads right isn't limited to Indianapolis. For years, I've had occasion to drive Highway

12, a four-lane road connecting Michigan City, Ind., and New Buffalo, Mich. It's uncanny: even though both towns share the same weather, Indiana's stretch is always pocked and pitted. As soon as you cross the Michigan border, hey presto! The road becomes smooth. Must be that pesky time change.

It's not as though our elected officials aren't aware of the problem. Gov. Daniels leased the entire Northwest Indiana Tollway in order to raise funds for infrastructure improvements. But this was the same Daniels who told a group last year that they should consider using a thinner grade of asphalt to cut costs on the I-69 extension. If they do, you can expect that road never to be finished. There will be crews out there patching and repairing great hunks of it for generations to come. Contractors call that a gift that keeps on giving.

For his part, Mayor Ballard is trying to find money for better roads by selling the water company to Citizens Gas. As with leasing the toll road, cashing out a formerly public asset turns out to be a handy way of raising money without having to ask the public for a tax increase. In both

cases, the public seems comfortable with this kind of deal.

That's the trouble. We're the ones who elect these folks, so the blame for the deplorable condition of our streets really belongs to us. Ask most local politicians what's with the roads — or the sewers, the bridges, the sidewalks — and they'll tell you how the buck has been passed from one administration to the next, going back

decades. Nothing more than the minimum in road repair is ever done because we the People punish whichever politician tells us what it'll cost.

This says something about how we think of our city. It suggests that many people in Indianapolis are still uneasy about urban living, wary of investing themselves in a place where the quality of life is determined by their willingness to connect with one another. The city likes to brag about its volunteerism, but volunteers don't fix streets.

Lucky for us, we have an election coming this fall. Elections are great for streets. They affect mayors the way spring affects hibernating bears, creating sudden flurries of visible activity. For example, in a few weeks, they're finally going to start resurfacing Meridian Street. It's about time. Some cities have alleys that are in better shape than the outer lanes of this once-proud boulevard.

In scheduling this job for the months leading up to his reelection bid, Mayor Ballard is exercising a prerogative of his office, just like every mayor has before him. And to be fair, Ballard has paid more attention to streets than most. That just shows you how far we've let things slide — our streets still suck. ■

We like to brag about volunteerism, but volunteers don't fix streets.



HAIKU NEWS

by Jim Poyser

how can we defeat
Gadhafi if we can't spell
his name same way twice?

not to be left out
North Pole now joins South Pole in
the Ozone Hole Club

taking Saturday
off won't help post office keep
from going postal

that the air traffic
controller slept at Reagan
airport is too apt

if he hadn't screwed
PATCO maybe there would have
been coffee brewing

all across US
GOP is sure teeching
teechers a lessun

Kansas Rep suggests
illegal immigrants be
shot like hogs — oy vey!

a Hoosier Senate
Committee wastes time giving
a shit who weds whom

Jordan Dance closes
no more pointe shoes and tutus
capes or pas de deux

Butler in Final
Four again; behold the grit
of underbluedogs



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THUMBSUP THUMBSDOWN



GAS-FREE THIS THURSDAY

National No Gas Day on March 31 is a time to stick it to the man with a good ol' fashioned boycott. The event was organized by outraged consumers using social networking outlets like Facebook to spread the word across the nation. Over a million site members have already pledged their participation. First social media helped orchestrate revolution in Egypt, and now it's a key ingredient in a nationwide boycott. What's next, Facebook?



BACK HOME AGAIN...

Compromise has found its way into the hearts and minds of Indiana legislators. House Democrats filed back into the Statehouse Monday afternoon after Republicans agreed to several bill changes. Among the concessions made: Right-to-work legislation was taken off the table, as was a permanent ban on public employee bargaining and legislation for a private takeover of public schools; private school vouchers will be limited to 7,500 students the first year, 15,000 the second; and guidelines for Project Labor Agreements and the common construction wage were reconsidered. Encouraging progress, but no guarantees that Dems will actually vote for the provisions.



PARKING METERS, ACTIVATE!

At 7 a.m. Monday, Mayor Ballard's urban moneymaking scheme came to fruition as parking meters were activated downtown and in Broad Ripple Village. True, it's convenient and pretty tech-savvy that the meters take credit cards, but we're less enthused about the rate hike from \$0.75 to \$1.00, and a three-hour extension of metered parking until 9 p.m. Drivers will also have to start paying on Saturdays. Coin-operated meters will continue to run at the old rate and hours until replaced by their younger, sexier upgrades.



NAPTOWN SOLAR FARM

Indianapolis' southwest side will become home to the city's largest solar farm this spring. Energy Solutions began expansion on its demonstration site in January, adding a 100-kilowatt solar array. These linked panels can produce enough energy to power 12 average American homes. On top of promises to improve the environment and create jobs, the energy firm is targeting school districts, touting reductions in long-term operating costs, increased sustainability and saved teaching jobs. Valid selling points, but we doubt this'll be the cure-all fix for school funding.

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THOUGHT BITE

By Andy Jacobs Jr.

Blowing a billion on blowing up Libya: "Gadhafi killing own citizens" (a.k.a. armed rebels). Our beloved Abe L. killed rebel Americans — can't be all bad. Anyway, kick oil addiction with clean, cheap hydrogen and butt out of the Middle East.

Butler heads to Final Four

Last season's underdog is this year's top dog

BY ANDREW ROBERTS
EDITORS@NUVO.NET

Despite the 1,000-mile geographical difference and a gaping Gordon Hayward-sized hole in the roster, the circumstances of Butler's presence in this year's Final Four couldn't be further from those of 2010. Last year, they cruised into the tournament with an outright regular season championship and a mid-season win over Ohio State to boot. They were given a five-seed and then easily disposed of UTEP. A week later, the *Hoosiers* comparisons became inescapable as they took a round trip to the Final Four at Lucas Oil Stadium.

Though equally dramatic and unlikely, this year's effort has been even more non-sensical — and thus captivating. Butler started this season 4-4 and had a three-game losing streak in early February that left most of us thinking it would be another million years before the romanticism of 2010 ever found its way back to Indiana. This season, they lost more games in their first month than they did in the entire 2009-2010 season.

It wasn't just the win/loss column that was cause for concern — Butler finished the season 177th in rebounds, 190th in assists, 122nd in shooting and 71st in scoring. But somehow they managed to beat three of the best 16 teams in the country in a single week. That's three more ranked teams than they beat during the regular season, as they went 0-3 against Duke, Xavier and Louisville, none of whom survived the Sweet 16.

To find out how they've done all this without Hayward, one needs look no further than the horizontal numbers on the stat sheet next to the name "Matt Howard." The underappreciated senior not only helped to reduce the impact of losing Hayward — Howard has actually surpassed him as a scorer. Considering Hayward's numbers from 2009-2010 compared to Howard's from this season, Butler's continued success starts to make a little more sense: Howard has more points (16.7 to 15.5), better three-point shooting (43% to 29%), similar rebounding (7.7 to 8.2) and fewer turnovers.

Butler finds itself in an unfamiliar position for this time of year: being the favorite to win.

Picking up the slack

But if Butler basketball has taught us anything over the last two years, it's that statistics and individual accolades are virtually meaningless in the month of March. It's hard to wish things were different when they've gone so well, but the last few minutes of these games have been sorely missing Hayward's crossover-dribble ability to create his own scoring opportunities.

Shelvin Mack has filled that role nicely, but unlike Hayward, he can't pass the ball to Shelvin Mack when he's double-teamed. And dribbling the length of the floor and heaving up twenty shots a game would be exhausting for anyone. Enter: Chrishawn Hopkins and his 1.6 points per game.

Hopkins' three points and one assist against Florida pumped life into Mack and the rest of the Bulldogs, and the quick five-point swing that ensued when he entered the game proved to be the turning point. The steady hands of players like Andrew Smith and Ronald Nored will get Butler through the game, but the energy and athleticism of Hopkins, Khyle Marshall and Shawn Vanzant have been — and will continue to be — Butler's answer to the raw talent gap they face this weekend.

The match-up

Going into Saturday's game, Butler finds itself in an unfamiliar position for this time of year: being the favorite to win. Nothing is certain in March, but Brad Stevens' struggles have typically come against teams with excellent post-play and aggressive rebounders, and to say that Virginia Commonwealth is absolutely terrible at rebounding would be an understatement. They finished the season with the 301st most rebounds, and their victory over

Kansas was largely due to great three-point shooting — which will be much harder to come by against the Bulldogs' team defense.

If VCU expects to win on Saturday, there will need to be a lid over Butler's basket because it's very difficult to imagine the Rams putting up more than 65

points. They skated past an untested Kansas team despite moments of truly awful shot selection and a handful of ugly turnovers, and — as usual — getting out-rebounded.

Additionally, it's unlikely that Butler will shoot 9.5% from behind the arc like Kansas did.

The best hope for VCU is Jamie Skeen, who managed to put up 26 on KU's Morris brothers. He's similar in size and skill-set to Matt Howard, but if Howard can win, tie or contain the front-court battle against Skeen, Vanzant and Mack will be free to



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Cheer on Shelvin Mack & Co. at this Saturday's Final Four viewing party on Butler's campus.

shut down Joey Rodriguez and the other VCU sharpshooters in the backcourt.

Ideally, point guard Joey Rodriguez will get desperate if Skeen is unproductive and may start chucking three-pointers from four feet behind the line, like he did against Kansas when their offense stalled.

Far from home, close to victory

If Butler survives VCU on Saturday, there are two teams waiting on the other side of the bracket that pose threats a little more familiar to Bulldog fans. Connecticut has been on fire and Kentucky has been, well, Kentucky.

The scariest player in the other half of the Final Four is not UConn's Kemba Walker and his nightly 24 points; it's Kentucky's big bulldozer Josh Harrellson and his nine rebounds per game. Like Duke's Brian Zoubek did in last year's national championship game, Harrellson has the potential to plow through the lane and goad Matt Howard into early foul. If the battle in the paint between the two beasts neutralizes them both, UK would happily take that trade-off.

Butler players won't get to sleep in their own beds the night before the game, and

they won't have thousands of their own fans showing up at their shooting practice. But don't let the easy storyline fool you — the crowd in last year's semi-final was largely pro-Spartan. The proximity of Butler's campus to Lucas Oil Stadium wasn't able to compensate for their 30,000-plus size disadvantage to the big state school, and if they move on to the finals this year, I fully expect that disadvantage to be exacerbated when they're a 16-hour drive from home.

Reliant Stadium in Houston is 1,036 miles from Butler's stadium, compared to the 7-mile trip to the Final Four they had last year. However, the "Butler Way" of basketball is played on neither paper nor Mapquest, and this year's sordid road to the Final Four for the Bulldogs has been far less traveled. Let's hope that makes all the difference. ■

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APRIL 16 - 17, 2011

THE PATRONESS OF POTHOLES

LINDA SALMON'S ADOPT-A-POTHOLE PROGRAM TAKES CITY BY STORM

AN EXPOYSÉ BY JIM POYSER
JPOYSER@NUVO.NET



Linda Salmon, with Skylar [last name withheld] behind her, gestures to the primordial adopted pothole.

When north side resident Linda Salmon lost her beloved Basset Hound down a large pothole outside her home, she didn't hang her head dejectedly and surrender to her loss. Nor did she decide to fight back or even get even. Instead, she started a program that is turning our city's pothole problems into something positive — just weeks after a tragic personal experience.

In partnership with the City of Indianapolis, Salmon has created the country's first Adopt-a-Pothole program, modeled after the ubiquitous Adopt-a-Median program.

In the process, Salmon turned a personal horror story into one of joy. Nay, redemption.

"Sparky [her Basset Hound] was trapped as usual in the house as I went to get the mail," Salmon recalled, sitting on the porch of her modest home. "But somehow he slipped through and he just took off and went flying into the street."

The eight year-old dog accidentally ran into a massive pothole outside her house — and disappeared from sight.

"It's a big hole," said Salmon, gesturing to it. "I mean, you could lose a Mini Cooper down there."

She laughed until the laugh caught in her throat and threatened to turn to tears.

"After the initial shock," said Salmon, 27, a meta-beta-data-processor by profession, "I ran after him and shouted down the hole. I swear I heard my voice come back as an echo. Some neighbors came out. We got a

"Sparky was such a great and noble dog and when we went into the pothole, I just thought, that's so glorious, that's, like, his glory hole."

— Linda Salmon

flashlight. Nothing. Finally, I got on the phone to the Mayor's Inaction Line."

A dream turned nightmare

Jolene Jumbert, who at that time worked in the mayor's office as the person who finally gets around, eventually, after, you know, whenever, to listen to the messages that people leave on the Inaction Line, initially thought the call from Linda Salmon was a joke.

"Initially," Jumbert, 36, said, "I thought the call from Linda Salmon was a joke."

But Jumbert listened to the message a second time, and followed her hunch to call Salmon back.

"I lost my dog in a farming accident," Jumbert recalled, "so she and I bonded pretty fast."

The two talked for awhile, with Jumbert promising the mayor would send out a work crew in the morning to help her find her dog. Indeed, the work crew arrived first thing and began to search for Sparky.

Salmon recalled the scene: "Well, there was one guy who was real brave and went down

the hole. Then there was another guy who watched him go down. Then there were two other guys who were watching the guy who watched him go down. And then there were four other guys who were watching the guys who were watching the guy who watched the first guy go down. They were, like, layers of support for each other."

But the search was futile and that was a very dark day indeed for Salmon.

"It was a very dark day indeed for me that day," said Salmon, turning away.

She went to bed that night, bereft of hope of ever finding Sparky.

That night, she had a dream that became a nightmare.

"In my dream," Salmon said, "I'm leaning over the edge of the pothole, and I hear my dog barking in the distance. I'm overjoyed! But then right before he gets to me I realize there's a giant truck full of, you know, tar or asphalt or whatever behind me and it's, like, a dump truck and it dumps all this steaming you-know-what into the hole! I woke up all freaked out."

An idea started to form in her mind, as she lay awake in her bed, processing this nightmare, and the

next day she called Jolene Jumbert at the Mayor's Inaction Line.

Unfortunately, by then, due to budget problems, Jumbert's role had been diminished to being the person who *watches* the person who eventually, after, you know, whenever, listens to the messages that people leave on the Inaction Line.

"I was watching the person who had my old job, listening to that message, and I just had a feeling it was Linda [Salmon]," Jumbert said.

On her break, Jumbert called Salmon back as Salmon described her dream turned nightmare.

"It was dream-turned-nightmarish, all right," said Jumbert, shaking her head. "A real doozy. When my dog died in the farming accident, I dreamed I found its disembodied little tail in my bed and it wouldn't stop wagging."

It was during the call that Salmon shared her vision of preserving the pothole just as it was, in case Sparky ever came back.

"Like, like a living museum memory encased in amber," Salmon said. "I mean, if they fixed the pothole, then Sparky would be forever trapped ... *down there.*"

Jumbert, moved by her vision,

promised Salmon she'd go to the mayor with the idea.

Sparky's glory hole

It was not, however, so easy. By the end of her break-time, Jolene Jumbert found she had been downsized again, this time relegated to the role of the person whose job it is to tell other people their job no longer exists, so it was harder than usual for her to find a pathway to the mayor.

She did eventually pitch the idea to a sub-underling of an under-underling of the mayor, and the idea was immediately embraced.

The mayor's spokesperson, Ron Runamouth, who took the time to write a painstakingly-crafted email to NUVO upon condition of anonymity, said, "The Adopt-a-Pothole program was an instant success around the office. Not that we didn't *want* to fix the potholes. As you know we had dispatched teams of bureaucrats to find the means to privatize and outsource cadres of workers to see about getting the job done, pronto-ish, but this idea of Slamon's [sic] was a win-win."

The mayor's office sent out a cadre of workers to watch one worker — while the rest of the cadre formed supportive layers — deliver a sign to Salmon, a sign that proclaimed her pothole "Sparky's glory hole."

"That's what I wanted it to say," smiled Salmon, shrugging. "Sparky was such a great and noble and magnificent dog and when we went into the pothole, I

just thought, that’s so glorious, that’s, like, his glory hole.”

And so the Adopt-A-Pothole movement was born.

Before long, every television broadcast station in Central Indiana had spent time with Salmon, and her new “Sparky’s glory hole” sign, in their “local color” segments.

Within a week, there were dozens of calls into the Mayor’s Inaction Line, requesting Adopt-A-Pothole status for potholes all over the city. Despite the fact that further budget cuts had rendered the entire office of the Inaction Line devoid of employees, the pothole project has proceeded. [See sidebar.]

Ron Runamouth elaborated: “What with our current fiscal restraints, and the lack of tax revenue hikes on the horizon, given the Constitutional property tax freeze and the general complexion of the mood of the populace, this is just a win-win-win. It’s a win for taxpayers, a win for government, and a glorious win for the memory of Sparky.”

The plot thickens

While nearly everyone was supportive of the Adopt-A-Pothole program, there were some naysayers, and in an effort to fairly balance this article, we are going to now give ample space to those who were concerned about the environmental impacts of allowing city streets to crumble, in addition to the imbroglio of these sanctioned potholes causing cars to swerve around maniacally and prove a danger to passersby.

[Editors note: Due to space constraints, we are unable to print this part of our story; we feel it’s important we run all our photos, and run them large, so that those of you who don’t like to read (and especially those of you who NEVER read Editors notes), will be inexorably pulled into this evocative and important story. That way, perhaps, we can save the entire profession of journalism from going down the (you)tubes.]

There was in fact one individual who completely misunderstood the Adopt-A-Pothole project. He watched the local TV news segments featuring Linda Salmon, he read the daily paper’s story about her (Editors note: that’s where we at NUVO tend to get our ideas) and one day, he marched right up to her door and knocked.

Salmon remembered her first encounter with this visitor. “I’d long been past the point where I thought someone was going to find Sparky and bring him back to me,” she said. “But something about this knock just made my heart skip a beat.”

She went to the door, opened it, and standing there on her porch was Skylar [last name withheld].

Salmon recalled: “He said ‘Hi, I’m here about your program,’ and I said ‘The Adopt-A-Hole program?’ And he said ‘Yeah, uh, no. No, wait. Pothole?’”

Skylar, it turns out, had thought it was a program to Adopt-A-*Pothhead*.

“Yeah, I sure messed that up,” he told NUVO. “It’s not the first time I messed something up,” he added, grinning a sheepish smirk that spoke dimensional, complex volumes to us, as we, admittedly, had just smoked a blunt with Skylar to get up the gumption to proceed with our interview as we were, admittedly, becoming desperate to find an additional, emotional angle to keep this story worth reading.

“He was expecting me to feed him!”



A local resident has started an Adopt-A-Trash-hole initiative, where a pothole can become a collecting spot for all the garbage that fuckin’ idiotic people throw out of their cars, and the city has no money to pay anyone to gather up that trash.



Jolene Jumbert, now out of work, is growing vegetables in her adopted pothole she has dubbed Totally Urban Gardens, so that she and her family have something to eat.

cried Salmon, laughing. “And, I don’t know, there was something about Skylar that made me just want to take him under my wing and whip up a cream cheese and cucumber everything bagel with bacon crumbles and chocolate chips.”

She invited him in, and according to both Salmon and Skylar, he’s never left her house, except to occasionally sit on her porch, or stand in the street for photos.

“I guess she did sorta end up adopting me after all,” Skylar said, staring off into space with a, well, a profound look of understanding that just as quickly became a blank stare of confusion before turning back into something that looked profound again.

“He’s cute,” Salmon said, eyeing him. “And I really think it’s wonderful that his last name really is [last name withheld].”

The seed spreads

As we were finishing up this story, we learned the governor had found out about

the Adopt-A-Pothole program and was wildly supportive, or at least mildly supportive on the outside, thus suggesting great tectonic fonts of emotions brewing within.

He issued the following statement to NUVO [Editors note: Well, actually, it was sent to Indiana media outlets, and the truth is we were left out of his recipient list, but we were able to purchase a copy of the statement from our friends at our local weekly competitor who, in our estimation, doesn’t need the scrilla, given they are the largest newspaper/media corporation in the Northern Friggin’ Hemisphere, but hey, we were over a barrel, as they say, whatever that means, and so we coughed up the bucks because we felt we could finally, ultimately, legitimize this otherwise sorry-ass story with a quote from the governor].

“I applaud this effort by a common citizen to turn a lemon into a lemonade of inspiration. In fact, I find it downright visionary in the most forward-seeing kind of way. And so I have instructed my staff to begin to ponder how it could be applied to other areas of our state’s challenges, as we move into a future with fiscal restraints, but is otherwise going to be okay in a larger sense because there’s no such thing as climate change, so don’t you worry your pretty little heads about that.

“Think of the possibilities: Adopt-A-Manure Pit, Adopt-a-Coal-fired Plant, Adopt-A-Dry Wetland, Adopt-An-Easterly’s-Pile... It’s endless when you start to think about it. I’d go so far as to say that each and every public school in the state could be adopted by a well-meaning citizen, because, to be frank, I don’t know what else the state can do for our crumbling public school system other than to further undermine it with budget cuts and voucher vouches and whatnot, so it’s great to see common Hoosiers stepping up, and doing what Hoosiers do best: Fill in the gaps where government fails to serve.”

Looking for Sparky

It’s late in the day, and Linda Salmon is standing on her porch, gazing out at her adopted pothole. She’s drinking lemonade. Inside, Skylar [last name withheld] is in the living room, playing video games. The sun



In better days: Sparky.

is setting and an orange glow starts to radiate along the street in front of the house.

And there’s the pothole, by Salmon’s account, growing larger by the day. The sign, “Sparky’s glory hole,” has been moved a couple of times to make sure that it, unlike its namesake, does not descend into the hole, forever lost.

Salmon pauses in between sips. You can tell she’s listening, pining for a distant bark, and thus a happy ending to this tragic, lost-dog tale. Then she hears Skylar’s laugh, and smiles.

It all turned out okay for everyone, except for maybe the dog. ■



Adopt-A-Pothole: officially sanctioned by the mayor

- Really Urban Gardens (RUG)
- Totally Urban Gardens (TUG)
- Urban Gardens Gone Wild
- Potholes whose Acronyms Spell Something (PASS)
- Conservatives for Missionary Position Copulation Only
- Progressives for Creative Copulation Positions
- Laissez Faire Folks for Getting Laid, Period

Adopt-A-Pothole: pending approval

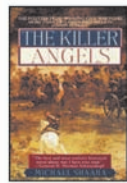
- Mini Cooper Haters, LLC
- Jim Jones Memorial Pothole
- Support Group for Families of People Killed by Cars While Tending Their Adopted Pothole



All joking aside, according to the real mayor of Indianapolis (not the fake mayor of this story), over 4,400 potholes have been filled this month. If you don’t want to adopt a pothole, you can report them by visiting www.indy.gov/pothole or call the Mayor’s Action Center, 327-4MAC.

Because Ideas Matter-

Recommended Readings by the
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at **Butler University**



The Killer Angels

By Michael Shaara
Ballantine Books, 1996

Reviewed by Richard McGowan

After reading *The Killer Angels*, I made it
my business to visit the beautiful and mov-
ing monument for Congressional Medal of

Honor winners. I had to read the name "Joshua Lawrence
Chamberlain," one of the most accomplished Americans to have
ever lived.

Schaara's *The Killer Angels*, the Pulitzer Prize-winning narrative
of the Battle at Gettysburg, tells why Chamberlain is, quite pos-
sibly, the single most important soldier of the Civil War. Along
the way, though, we meet many others, including Robert E. Lee
and Lee's "Old Warhorse," James Longstreet; John Buford,
"never to receive recognition for his part in choosing the ground
and holding it, and in so doing saving not only the battle but
perhaps the war," and George Pickett, who said bitterly of Lee,
"That man destroyed my Division."

The Killer Angels, therefore, is not simply an account of a bat-
tlefield. While military strategy and tactics unfold in the book's
pages, the narrative accounts of the generals, field officers and
soldiers turn Gettysburg into a flesh-and-blood endeavor involv-
ing people.

Schaara's book, meticulously researched and written, would
have a place on the shelf of any American historian by virtue of
its account of military maneuvers. It belongs on the shelf of any
serious reader by virtue of its characterizations of the principal
figures in the Civil War's most famous battle.

Were a person only to learn about Joshua Lawrence Chamber-
lain in reading *The Killer Angels*, that would be, by itself, reason
enough to read this book.

— Richard McGowan is Instructor of Business Ethics at Butler University.

Go to www.butler.edu/BookReview for more
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SUBMITTED PHOTO

Work by Rogelio Manzo is part of the 'Visceral Discourse' show at ARTBOX, one of many exhibits throughout the city for this month's First Friday.

1 FRIDAY VISUAL ART

Visceral Discourse at ARTBOX

Featuring the work of Indy native **Jason Myers** and Sacramento's **Rogelio Manzo**, **Visceral Discourse** will be an escape from the norms of a mundane life. Myers' work varies in use of color, from bold and violent to soft and muted. His use of texture and overlapping support themes that are typically stoic while some are quite violent. Manzo's physical portraits do more than represent people, they visually imply emotions in an attempt to "unearth the story below the surface." His work is an ongoing attempt to expose viewers to realities. Show will be held from 5 p.m. to 12 a.m. on April 1 at **ARTBOX** Stutz II, 217 W. 10th St. For more information, call 955-2450 or visit www.artboxindy.com. Admission is free. ■



30 WEDNESDAY FILM

The 49 Hour Film Competition

Film nerds unite! It's time for the MG Collective's first annual **49 Hour Film Competition**—an animation only event based on the 48 Hour Film Project with an extra hour given for rendering. Teams are limited to five members, with each team

able to apply accordingly to one of two categories: student or professional. The competition will be judged by national artists and animators from Sony Animation, Fusion Digital Productions and Industrial Light & Magic. Films will be evaluated on storytelling, art direction, animation and execution. Registration ends March 30, and the competition begins April 1 at 6 p.m. For more, visit www.indyfilmnews.com. Screening event and the announcement of the winners will be at the Elbow Room downtown, 605 N. Pennsylvania when judging is completed. ■

31 THURSDAY THEATER

"This" at the Phoenix

This, which has been described as a melancholy comedy, is about a group of close friends entering middle age. Confused about life in general and specifically about the fun stuff—relationships, sex, friendships, and more—they find themselves tangled when a party game uncovers some uncomfortable feelings. Melissa James Gibson's drama about how we experience and cope with love, hurt, and loss premieres at the **Phoenix Theatre**, 749 N. Park Avenue, March 31 at 7 p.m. Performances run



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Some of Indy's best actors star in 'This' at the Phoenix: Scot Greenwell, Ryan Artzberger, Donna J. Edmonds and Jennifer Johansen. Photo by Zach Rosing.

Thursday through Sunday from March 31 to April 24. Visit www.phoenixtheatre.org or call 635-7529 for show times and tickets. Tickets range from \$15 to \$25. ■

31 THURSDAY COMEDY

Jon LaJoie at the Athenaeum

It's a rare breed that can skyrocket to fame with a song called "Show Me Your Genitals" — currently at over 20 million YouTube hits — but apparently **Jon LaJoie** is of it. He broke free of the typical 15 minutes of fame the Internet provides and recently joined the ensemble cast of "The League" on FX as Taco. Besides that, he also produced a record-breaking album "You Want Some of This" and sold out his Live Nation tour of Canada. Expect the various characters he's created and maybe even some of his other songs, like "Everyday Normal Guy" or "High as F#%k." Start laughing March 31 at the **Athenaeum Theatre**, 401 E. Michigan St. Doors open at 7 p.m. All ages allowed, but parental advisory is encouraged, if you weren't able to tell from any of the song titles. Admission is \$23 in advance, \$26 at the door. For more information and tickets, visit www.mokb-presents.com or www.athenaeumfoundation.org, or call 630-4569. ■

1 FRIDAY PARTY

NCAA Women's Final Four Weekend

The Women's NCAA believes in kicking off an event in style. In celebration of the four teams competing for the 2011 national championship, they are hosting **Cirque de Salute**, a red-carpet celebration that is free and open for the public to attend. The event will be hosted by Indiana native Sage Steele, a commentator for ESPN. Cirque de Salute recognizes student-athletes and coaches and will include a performance by nationally-recognized Broadway company Cirque Dreams, an acrobatic group that has toured worldwide. While the red carpet arrival of the teams is open to the public, registration is required for the actual event. Tickets are \$20 and must be bought by March 30. The Cirque de Salute celebration takes place at the Georgia St. entrance of the **Indiana Convention Center**, 100 S. Capitol Ave. at 7:30 p.m. on April 1. ■



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1 FRIDAY SPIRITUALITY **Braco's gazing sessions**

Some 200,000 individuals visit him a year and he can cure with a gaze. Strange events such as this rarely hit the Midwest, but Indy native Ashley Shapiro is bringing the European phenomenon **Braco** (from Croatia) to our city for a combined total of eighteen "gazing sessions" which have resulted in numerous reported healings. Even individuals who have watched DVDs or streamed web sessions of Braco have reported healings. Believe or not, the opportunity presents a clear learning experience. Nine sessions will be held April 1 and nine more will be held April 2 at the **Indiana**



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Even this photo of Braco is calming and healing, don't you think?

Freemasons' Hall, 525 N. Illinois St., which seats 500. Tickets may only be purchased at the door if they still remain. Each session is scheduled for 40 minutes and costs \$8. Attendees must be 18, and women past their first trimester of pregnancy may not attend. For more information about the event, visit www.braco.net. ■

1 FRIDAY VISUAL ART/ FUNDRAISER **Cultural Cannibals present Culture Shock**

Celebrate that big old melting pot (and give back to your community) by heading out this weekend to **Culture Shock**, presented by Spitting Llama Productions in conjunction with the Latino Youth Collective (LYC) and the Cultural Cannibals. Show your support for an event that hopes to demonstrate how important the "cultural, religious and spiritual diversity" is that the immi-

grant community brings to Indiana. No better way to show that than with the kickin' bands set to perform, including DJ Kyle Long, La Republica, Beaner Threat and even a local Ethiopian dance group, Growing as a Second Generation. The event will be held April 1 at 7 p.m. at the **Athenaeum**, 401 E. Michigan St. Tickets are \$7 in advance, \$10 at the door, with all funds going to a scholarship for an immigrant student picked by LYC. For more information and tickets, visit www.latinoyouthcollective.com or call 531-5835. Be sure to pop by the "Art Full of Hope - Orphan Art Exhibit" also held in the Athenaeum that night, held by Saving Orphans through Healthcare Outreach (SOHO), and also featuring the DJ skills of Long. Admission is free and event is from 7 p.m. to midnight. ■

1 FRIDAY VISUAL ART **7 Artists Pick 7 Artists**



With so many mediums available to artists, why limit an exhibition to drawings, paintings or ceramics? **Dean Johnson Gallery** and **christopher west presents** will host **7 Artists Pick 7 Artists**. The name suggests the process by which the pieces were chosen, seven artists picked

work by artists who have had work exhibited before and provide a diverse, eclectic mix of works in a wide variety of mediums. Artists chosen are: Jeff Beekman, Jared Cru Smith, Benjamin Sunderlin, Phil Tennant, Jill Marie Mason, Scott Grow and Chris Stewart. To find out who chose them, go to the opening ceremony April 1 from 6-9 p.m. at the **Dean Johnson Gallery**, 646 Massachusetts Ave. For more information, call 317-634-8020 or visit www.deanjohnson.com or www.christopherwestpresents.com. Admission is free. ■

2 SATURDAY PERFORMANCE ART **The Amazing Acro-Cats**

To support the saying that cats always land on their feet, **The Amazing Acro-Cats**, one of only four feline performing house-cat troupes in the U.S., will display their incredible skills. Ticket sales benefit Cats Haven Cat Shelter, and is meant to bring awareness to homeless felines as well as those who are unwanted because of special needs like illness. Traveling along with Acro-Cats is the band "The Rock-Cats" who have had major success and growth in numbers as the only all-feline band in the world. Performances are on April 2 at 2 p.m., 5 p.m.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Acro-Cats return to IndyFringe.

and 8 p.m. and April 3 at 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. at the **IndyFringe Theatre**, 719 E. St. Clair St. Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$10 for kids under 12. For more information, visit www.circuscats.com or call 721-9458. ■



Starting line of last year's Marian Cycling Classic elite race

PHOTO BY LAURA MCPHEE

Marian Midwest Cycling Classic

A day of collegiate, elite competition

BY LAURA MCPHEE
LMCPHEE@NUVO.NET

Marian University is the site for the 15th annual Marian University Midwest Cycling Classic this Saturday, April 2, for what promises to once again be a full day of exciting collegiate and elite competition.

The racecourse is a 2.5 km circuit that includes two hills as it winds through the Marian University campus and the Lake Sullivan Sports Complex on the city's near Westside.

Morning races feature collegiate men and women's teams, and the home team Marian Cycling Knights are the ones to beat in both the NCCA Women's 'A' race at 11:55 a.m. and the Men's A at 12:50 p.m.

Over the past few weeks, riders for Marian have logged impressive finishes around the Midwest. In Notre Dame last weekend, the men's team took five of the top ten places at the finish, just as they did two weeks prior at the 'Mizzou' race in Columbia, Missouri.

Weston Luzadder who also rides for NUVO Cycling, has been leading the Knights in early races, with a big victory at the Mizzou. At that race, Luzadder and Marian/NUVO teammate Joe Kukolla were off the front from about the six-mile mark on the first of two 35-mile laps. The pair rode roughly five more miles before being caught by a chase group containing six or seven other Marian riders, as well as

Purdue/NUVO rider Drew Otte.

By the midway point of the first lap, the breakaway had cut the contenders down to one-third of those who'd started. Not too long after, Luzadder made his move -- blowing off the group out front and riding solo for nearly thirty miles before crossing the finish line unchallenged.

Otte described it as "typical of any other collegiate weekend: watch the Marian guys attack, follow, watch the next set of Marian guys attack, follow, and then watch Wes ride away from the field again."

Currently, Luzadder holds the top spot in individual rankings for the Midwest Collegiate Cycling Conference (MWCCC), with Marian teammates Jackie Simes, Adam Leibovitz, Alex Wieseler, Rob Bush and Joe Kukolla taking the next five spots.

In the women's competition, top-ranked Marian rider Jacqueline Kurth is joined by teammates Anna Young, Allie Dragoo, Kaitlin Antonneau in the current top ten MWCCC standings, giving the Knights ample strength and talent to pull off a win in the Women's A.

Depending on how the morning races go, Luzadder and Kukolla may join other NUVO riders for the Cat 1/2/3 race at 2:45 p.m. This will be the first major face-off for local teams and the field is limited to 100 contending for \$300 in prize money. Riders can register at www.truesport.com.

Marian University is located at 3200 Cold Spring Road. Cyclists and spectators must enter campus through the 30th Street entrance and follow signs to parking in front of the physical education center and CIVIC theater. Race start/finish will be located on Cold Spring Road in front of Allison Mansion. ■



WHAT: Marian University Midwest Cycling Classic
WHEN: Saturday, April 2; 9 a.m.
WHERE: 3200 Cold Spring Road
INFO: Admission is free

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The art of Malcolm Mobutu Smith

BY DAN GROSSMAN
EDITORS@NUVO.NET

The first thing Malcolm Mobutu Smith shows me when I walk into his studio, on the IU Bloomington campus, is a sculpture in raw clay that looks like an architectural model. With its irregularly-shaped towers and jutting angles it looks as if it could — if one day realized as an actual building — resemble the Indiana University Art Museum designed by world-renowned architect I.M. Pei.

But Smith isn't an architect; he's a ceramics artist. The aforementioned clay sculpture, dubbed a "collaborative wall," will soon be fired in a kiln and have a white, sandpaper surface which visitors can make marks on during Smith's exhibition *Inner City Inspiration: An Artist's Evolution in Clay*, at the Indianapolis Museum of Contemporary Art (iMOCA). This show, opening First Friday, April 1, will also feature an actual graffiti mural, as well as a wide sampling of Smith's sculptural and vessel work from his past 20 years as artist and educator. (Smith is currently Associate professor of Ceramic Art at I.U. Bloomington.)

One work in particular, in Smith's studio, reminds me of vessels of his I've seen before. Entitled "Mystic Cloud #1," it consists of a white, helmet-sized base with a rounded surface and fluid red, orange, and black graffiti markings. There's a gray horn-shaped extension out of this "cloud" that Smith uses as a handle when he picks it up and shows it to me.

He also shows me a work in ceramic entitled "We Did It?" which features a stereotypical portrayal of an African-American gleaned from early 20th Century comic books. The title of the piece, he tells me, suggests an uncertainty about the significance of the Obama election in light of the racially tinged backlash it has engendered.

And finally, I come upon his "Doppod," sculpture. With its triple bulbs in a tripod form, this work looks to me like a cross between the *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* space station and an ancient Israelite oil lamp. In fact, Smith used computer programs to design this work, composed of powdered gypsum, but did not touch it at all during its creation. It was "printed" three-dimensionally — graffiti-like designs on its surface and all — in a process called rapid prototyping.

These works and more will be on view at iMOCA from April 1 through May 14. This exhibition proposes to chart the evolution of his highly contemporary — and often forward-leaning — work. But when I sit down to talk with Smith, it's evident that



(Above and bottom left) In early March, artist Malcolm Mobutu Smith collaborated with IPS School #2 Center for Inquiry Grade School on this graffiti wall, on view starting Friday at iMOCA. (Bottom right) Malcolm Mobutu Smith.



he's also an artist with a thorough grounding in the tradition and practice of ceramic art that stretches back to the beginnings of civilization.

NUVO: Your *Backjumps* show at the Ruschman Gallery [in December, 2008] certainly expanded my notion of what ceramics could be.

SMITH: This show will be a reprise of some of the work from Ruschman because the actual thesis of this show is to show the chronology from my inspiration from hip-hop culture and graffiti specifically and how that affected the way my aesthetic has grown in ceramics. So we're going to see works that probably cover 20 years of my life as a ceramicist. I'm trying to make a visual case for seeing the movements and the abstractions and the improvisations in my clay works and how they literally fold off my looking at graffiti. By having a real graffiti mural in the space — it's 32 feet long and 8 feet high and presents the identities of four different graffiti artists [the FAB Crew] — and by having my ceramic works in literal proximity to it, it should all be self-explanatory, but there will be some didactic information to make certain things explicit.

NUVO: Do you know anything about the street art scene in Indianapolis?



Mark Ruschman and Malcolm Mobutu Smith.

SMITH: I don't, but I just met the guys that I worked with. The FAB Crew are the best graffiti artists in town and I lucked out in having a connection with them through a guy here in Bloomington. They worked with me on the panel images.

NUVO: Describe your collaboration with IPS School #2 Center for Inquiry Grade School.

SMITH: Mostly we wanted the students to interact with and see live, and in person, some real active practicing graffiti artists. To hear from the horse's mouth, so to speak, what it is to be a graffiti artist. So we shared with them a little bit about the history, a little bit about why we do graffiti and the actual process; what the

actual nuts and bolts of doing a piece from sketches to outline sketches with spray paint, the fill-ins, the background-ing; and then the most important part is the final outline... So we gave them a very compressed introduction to all that and then we let them handle some spray paint and actually work on the wall for a little while and we gave as many of the kids who wanted to a chance to use a spray can and see just how difficult it is to control a line, an edge or to create a certain kind of effects with a spray can. And then I went over most of what they did. Which they were aware of from the beginning...I did manage to preserve quite a bit of the backgrounding in my portion of the wall.

NUVO: This is the mural we'll be able to see at the iMOCA show?

SMITH: Yes.

NUVO: Mark Ruschman's curating this show, but it sounds like it might be more accurate to say that it was a collaboration between you two.

SMITH: It's a collaboration but he envisioned it... with iMOCA being such a street level museum. You can walk right in off of Virginia Avenue. The idea came from him. He proposed it to me. He saw a connection with what I do in my work and said "Here's an opportunity..." The real thrust that Mark had in mind ... was bringing this artwork that had its origins in the street, graffiti, into the museum.

NUVO: Can you describe your growing up and your interest in graffiti and how that evolved and affected your work as a ceramicist?

SMITH: As a young person, let's say 13, 14 — I'd already been committed to becoming an artist. My parents were artists. But I bumped into graffiti in a strange, sort of ironic way in the suburbs of Philadelphia, in a very affluent part, in the Main Line area of Pennsylvania. I felt an immediate connection to the kind of energy, the improvised character that is graffiti lettering. The magic of someone taking their name or their graffiti *nom de plume* and inventing on it over and over again....

Trying to come up with more and more originality. Originality is one of the ethics in all of hip-hop culture that drives it.... But because of that and because I saw the visual quality—the fact that these are flat works of art and things are twisting around and letters...you knew you were dealing with letters. And so once you found the rhythm and the particular graffiti artist's method, you wonder as to how they came up with a consistent design theme for that particular piece of graffiti.... I've been using that as sort of an artistic muse for how I improvise when I'm doing my vessels and the vessels I make are based on real vessels as graffiti artists use the alphabet, so there's a certain syntax and structure to a pot that I wanted to turn and bend with the same kind of flavor that I saw in graffiti and I've been doing that ever since.

FEATURE



NUVO: Do you see any commonalities between the designs that you see in Chinese and African potteries and the graffiti art that you admire?

SMITH: Yes. I definitely look for and see sort of a consciousness of graphic sensibilities that are similar or propagate through time in similar ways — rhythms and arcs that sort of bounce off each other both in African pots and in contemporary graffiti. In African music and contemporary hip-hop and dance there's a breadth of improvisation that's [also] in jazz or in Negro spirituals that builds out of African music and is sort of an unbroken legacy in contemporary music that the language of impulse and beat...

There's a visual kind of beat that happens in graffiti that is unmistakable... a similar kind of beat goes on in the literal music and dance of hip-hop music. In Chinese graphic sensibilities there's always been a strong sense of declaring a literal outline of form in Chinese imagery and that is something that I wouldn't say has directly influenced contemporary graffiti art but is definitely something that they would appreciate.

NUVO: Tell me about your work dealing with stereotypes.

SMITH: My newest work is dealing with social stereotypes in very sort of blunt way. I'm recycling old cartoon images of African-Americans and they're being put on the pieces in a painterly way onto my



new work. The work still has a sort of jazzy, improvised language of form. And then there's this blunt very derogatory image of African-American plastered on the surface of it.... I'm using a jigaboo character... another general term for it.... His name's Little Eight Ball. He's bald-headed, black guy, comes right out of the 1940s comic books. But essentially he's the same thing as the Sambo character except that he doesn't have any hair. They're meant to be comic relief, they're meant to be buffoons, they're meant to be funny things and they're also nonhuman, drawn in a very subhuman way and that was done throughout the 30s, 40s and 50s in comic book imagery and comic strips.... My interest in doing this was brought upon directly out of Obama's ascendancy to power... So I'm sort of saying we've got Obama in the White House now, but don't forget this stuff just hasn't fallen to the wayside just because we have this man in the seat. ■



WHAT: Inner City Inspiration: An Artist's Evolution in Clay
WHEN: Opening Reception at iMOMA: April 16 - 11 p.m.
 From April 11 to May 14
WHERE: Indianapolis Museum of Contemporary Art (iMOMA)
 1043 Virginia Ave,
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INFO:
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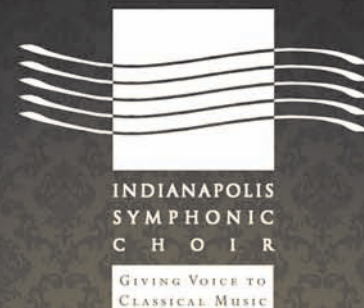


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Q-mmunity theater

Q Artistry finds a thriving home in Irvington

BY KATELYN COYNE
EDITORS@NUVO.NET

Q Artistry, a theater company based in the east side neighborhood of Irvington, first made waves in 2009 and '10 with the original musical *Cabaret Poe*. Ben Asaykwee is artistic director of Q Artistry, contributing both on stage and off as a writer, director, composer, actor and more. I talked with him at their Irvington headquarters, the Historic Irvington Lodge, where he and his company have found an artistic home.

Life before "Q"

Asaykwee, an Indiana native, moved to Chicago in 2005 to join, in his words, "a thriving arts community, instead of a growing arts community." While there, he worked successfully as a professional actor, yet felt unfulfilled by the ensemble roles he tended to play.

"I was constantly getting cast [as] Sailor #3 in *South Pacific*," explains Asaykwee [pronounced ah-SAY-kwee]. "It was just tiring doing the same old stuff over and over again. At the same time, I started writing more."

In 2007, Asaykwee created an alternative artistic outlet. "Some friends and I decided that we were going to start a company, just to write things and create things that we wanted to do. Because if Chicago wasn't going to offer it for us, we were going to offer it for ourselves. That's when I started writing *Cabaret Poe*."

Q Artistry debuted this musical interpretation of Edgar Allen Poe's short stories at Chicago's 2008 Looptopia Festival. Though they were booked into a mall setting, with escalators gliding up and down behind them, audiences praised the show.

"This was before it was in its final capacity," notes Asaykwee. "It was a one act version with 'The Raven' and a couple other things. But people loved it, and it was incredibly inspirational to me."

Around the time of the 2008 economic nose-dive, however, Asaykwee's acting schedule saw sudden lapses. He was at a crossroads: "Do I live somewhere where the cost of living is twice as much, and yeah, there is twice as much opportunity, or do I move close to my family?" That year, he returned to Indiana.

Irvington, a "Q-mmunity"

He continued to nurture his artistic baby, Q Artistry, and with an interest in the macabre, Asaykwee was drawn to Irvington for their ghost tours. When he discovered the Historic Irvington Lodge, the American



Ben Asaykwee is artistic director of Q Artistry. Here, he chills with a giant bunny. PHOTO BY MARK LEE

"I must trust everyone in the room to tell the truth to the question 'Do I look stupid?'"

— Ben Asaykwee

Romanticism of the building's architecture struck him. "Coming up into this space, and just the building from the outside... it kind of looks like something Edgar Allen Poe would have put together," he recounts. "We walked into the space and my imagination went wild."

A piece of Poe's world sleepily nestled in this Indy borough was too good to be true. There was no question in Asaykwee's mind; he had to remount his homage to the literary master for local audiences.

"I loved [*Cabaret Poe*], but I thought people would be like, 'Oh my god, you are massacring a master,'" says Asaykwee. "[It's] a hard sell until you show them some of it. When you first say 'Edgar Allan Poe set to music,' people start backing away with hands raised because it sounds either cheesy or dumb."

Asaykwee has a mantra tailor-made for those occasions: "I can't make everybody happy, but I can certainly make a whole hell of a lot of people mad."

Audiences were slow to come at first, drawn mostly from the neighborhood crowd looking for entertainment close to home. Q Artistry depended on word of mouth to sell the show.

Asaykwee praises the support from the Irvington community and points to businesses and the Historic Irvington

Community Council as factors in the show's initial success. He is the first to admit that without the goodwill of Irvingtonians, Q Artistry might not be alive today. Through this support, Q Artistry programmed a season of new work and also remounted *Cabaret Poe* the next year (2010).

Communities and theater companies often enjoy a symbiotic relationship; Irvington and Q Artistry is no exception. The audiences that come to Q Artistry's shows bring dollars to Irvington businesses. "October 2010 was a record month for us," says John Robertson owner of The Legend Classic Irvington Café, "a lot of it was due to Q Artistry."

Asaykwee continued to build on this community support throughout Q Artistry's first season in Indianapolis. He mounted his first ever "Q-mmunity" show, a send up of the *Harry Potter* franchise called *Perry Haughter*. Families turned out in droves to be part of the first ever Irvington community production. And that's just how he wanted it. "If you have zero talent and experience, we will find some place for you," says Asaykwee.

In his mind, it was something fun and cheap for neighbors and friends to do together. Of the experience Asaykwee says, "There wasn't a single moment of that process, and I can't say this about every project, that I did not find completely joyful." After the show's opening, Q Artistry's Irvington roots went deeper.

Asaykwee was happy, finally, to be part of Indianapolis' "growing arts community."

A future for "Q"

Asaykwee has set lofty goals, describing the company as "the only organization with a residency that does original works by Indiana natives." Asaykwee's company fills a niche. He explains: "Indianapolis

needs more original work. TOTS and Phoenix do a great job of supplying *new* works... That's one of the things I look forward to, is for Q Artistry to fill that void."

Asaykwee often finds himself playing multiple creative roles within the company. For *Cabaret Poe* alone, he wrote, composed, directed and acted; not to mention the full plate of work he accomplished as the company's artistic director. Making those transitions are a constant battle for the artist. He acknowledges the team around him as the foundation for his successful multi-tasking.

"[I] must trust everyone in the room to tell the truth to the question 'Do I look stupid?'" he says.

The easiest transition for Asaykwee is from writer to performer; he finds pleasure in melding his voice on the page with his voice on stage. In *Cabaret Poe*, for instance, he says, "I wrote it for myself, wrote the music to fit my voice." Transitioning from writer to director, he describes as, "They argue sometimes."

While Q Artistry has yet to produce work not written by Asaykwee, he hopes to open the company up as a platform for other Indianapolis artists. The future of Q Artistry, he envisions, is as an "inspiration center," a place to combine dance, theatre, visual art and more. In five years he wants to have "the freedom to let go of the reins, to let creativity soar, to let things happen."

In addition, he has big goals for the Irvington community: "For people from all over Indianapolis to think of Irvington as not only a place that is haunted, but also as a culturally centered neighborhood."

Next up for Q Artistry: *The Bunny Spectacular*, an idea that came to Asaykwee when he found a good deal on a bunny costume. For this artist, inspiration strikes randomly but is always welcome. The show is his attempt to de-commercialize Easter. "The only place that you can get your picture taken with the Easter Bunny is the mall. [I] wanted to give a more affordable, entertaining, artistic option for kids and families."

He also makes mention of an upcoming fundraiser: "The Q-ball," he grins, "get it?" Proceeds from the event will fund items on Q Artistry's wish-list: lighting and sound systems.

As Q Artistry develops, Asaykwee promises to continue grow artistically. "We try to either bare truth or bare enlightenment. If we are not pushing at least a little bit in theater, there is no point, because you can just stay home and read a book." ■



WHAT: Bunny Spectacular

WHEN: April 1-23
Fridays and Saturdays at 7 p.m.
Sundays at 3 p.m.

Running time: 1 hour

INFO: Tickets: Adults \$7, Seniors and Children (under 12) \$5

For tickets: purchased at the door or www.brownpapertickets.com or 1-800-838-3006

Q Artistry at the Irvington Lodge
5515 E Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46219
www.qartistry.org

A&E REVIEWS

DANCE

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

★★★★☆

Indiana University Jacobs School of Ballet, Musical Arts Center, March 25-26. Bold programming brought three iconic works together for an aesthetic tour de force of dance. IU School of Ballet dancers proved their mettle presenting Paul Taylor's modern dance, Anthony Tudor's story ballet and George Balanchine's fusion of ballet/musical theater. An outstanding live orchestra and soloists, conducted by Stewart Kershaw, added to the thrill of the program. Twelve dancers moved seamlessly in and out of the complexities of Taylor's *Cloven Kingdom* [1976] merging our animalistic instincts with expected behaviors during a black tie social event. Layering and interspersing athleticism onto graceful lines is simultaneously amusing and thought provoking, heightened by music by Arcangelo Corelli, Henry Cowell and Malloy Miller. Tudor's highly theatrical 1936 ballet *Lilac Garden* grows from Ernest Chausson's *Poem for Violin and Orchestra* as the story of a woman dealing with the consequences of an arranged marriage of convenience. Brette Benedict, Christopher Scruggs, Iver Johnson and Laura Whitby brought authoritative technique and superb acting/miming qualities to the leading roles, and eight supporting dancers were equally perfect, timing entrances and exits, building dimensional characters and plumbing psychological impacts of thwarted true love. Benjamin Hoffman's solo violin plumbed emotional depths. *Who Cares?* [1970] set on 16 songs composed by George Gershwin traces Balanchine's arc out of a period of personal loss and was created nearly four decades after Gershwin originally asked Balanchine to choreograph a film. Gershwin died before the project reached fruition. With a nod to Fred Astaire, Balanchine combined the lines of ballet with the verve of show dancing to the score adapted and orchestrated by Hershey Kay. Featuring pianist Susan Chou, four principal dancers, a corps de ballet of ten women and five couples, *Who Cares?* is a fun-filled romp across New York City. IU continues to deliver amazing opportunities for their students, by providing excellent directors working with great choreography. — **RITA KOHN**

MUSIC

EIGHTH BLACKBIRD

★★★★☆

Ensemble Music Series; IMA's the Toby; March 26. Compared with their first appearance here on Nov. 28, 2007, eighth blackbird the second time around had to be considered rather conservative: no highly unorthodox instruments, no visual effects, no chanting or singing of any stripe. Our six very versatile performers stuck with just playing their preferred instruments. The one exception to that was *Meanwhile* (2007) by Stephen Hartke (b. 1952). Here the players moved about the stage, rather like slow-motion puppets, with pianist Lisa Kaplan, violinist/violist Matt Albert, cellist Nicholas Photinos, flutist Tim Munro and clarinetist Michael J. Maccaferri changing instruments and keeping the rhythm. *Still Life with Avalanche* (2008) by 30-year-old Missy Mazzoli began the program, and built to a sparkling



SUBMITTED PHOTO

eighth blackbird performed at the Toby last on Saturday.

study in timbres, the piece imaginative and colorful. Not quite so with the ensuing Philip Glass work, *Music in Similar Motion* (1969), an early example of minimalism. Here his mastery is questionable, starting and continuing with an incessantly repeated melodic figuration. For me it was a crashing bore. Following the break came Marc Mellits' (b. 1966) *Spam* (1995), this time with percussionist Matthew Duvall absent, giving us a motor-like — think "choo-choo train" — rhythm with the five players all contributing their own pitches to a generally agreeable combo. Steve Reich (b. 1936) provided the program's last, and best-by-far offering, *Double Sextet* (2007). We heard 12 performers, the six eighth blackbird people in front of us and the same group recorded, playing different-but-well-blending material at the same time. The piece had something compelling melodically, harmonically, rhythmically and colorwise to say. That is all you can ask of any great music. For more review details, visit www.nuvo.net. — **TOM ALDRIDGE**

THEATER/PERFORMANCE

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JAMES

★★★★☆

Indiana Repertory Theatre; directed by Chuck Smith; through April 10; www.irtlive.com; 635-5252. There are several moments in *The Gospel According to James* that don't ring true, but that is the point. Playwright Charles Smith (*Pudd'nhead Wilson*) looks at the 1930 double lynching in Marion, Indiana, through two, often conflicting perspectives. The first belongs to James Cameron (Andre DeShields), who escaped the lynching and, decades later, seeks to memorialize its victims. The second is Marie (Linda Kimbrough), a woman who spent a lifetime trying to forget she was there. As the two take turns narrating the events of that horrific August night, heroes become villains, cads turn kind, and a distressed damsel starts to look like a willing shill. Director Chuck Smith (of Chicago's Goodman Theatre) beautifully orchestrates supporting performances, broad and nuanced, until we can't tell which characterizations represent reality and which the fantasy of memory. If the two Smiths can't give us the facts behind the tragedy, they do well to uncover truth, then as now, in the fragile swagger of youth, the complexities of the parent-child bond, and the infinite potential for hate. *The Gospel* grows too rich in symbolism at the end, but overall, this production, set against a nearly bare stage with a tree-painted backdrop, is disquieting and deeply moving. It is an exciting commission from the IRT, heading to Chicago's Victory Gardens Theatre after this premiere run. — **JOSEFA BEYER**

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James completed the 2003 theatre tour "Paying for the New Trailer" starring Jeff Foxworthy and Larry The Cable Guy. James was featured on Comedy Central's Premium Blend which aired in 2005. In 2007 he appeared on CMT's "Comedy Stage" and "Greatest Redneck Moments II". In late 2008 he was the featured comedian on The Late Late Show With Craig Ferguson on CBS.

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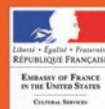
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Gyros with a kick

Al Basha adds heat to Mediterranean fare

BY DAVID HOPPE
DHOPPE@NUVO.NET

Sometimes you want a quick and simple lunch or dinner that's got a little kick to it, and doesn't cost much. Let's also say you've met your burger and pizza quotient for the month, so something different is a plus.

This is where a place like Al Basha, a new Mediterranean restaurant and grocery store in Broad Ripple, comes in.

Al Basha is located in the Broad Ripple strip mall that, for years, has been home to two of the Village's most stalwart dining establishments: the Thai Café and Shalimar. In the years since those two fixtures opened, this strip has become home to a variety of other eateries and, now that Thr3e Wise Men has opened by the entry to the strip's parking lot, this swatch of Broad Ripple real estate has become more popular than ever for hungry folks.

Al Basha makes a simple first impression. The unadorned room is scrupulously neat and clean. A few tables share the space with a surprisingly extensive array of Middle Eastern foodstuffs. Here you'll find chilled baked goods and Labna, a yogurt-type spread, along with canned goods, spices and such basic building blocks of Mediterranean cuisine as chick peas, farina, semolina, sumac and bulgar wheat.

When ordering at the counter, you'll find that Al Basha offers all the classics – hummus (\$4.50), the disconcertingly named but tasty Foul Mudammes (\$4), stuffed grape leaves (\$7.99), falafel (\$6.99) and gyros (\$5.99) – as well some all-American options like a ribeye steak sandwich (\$7.99), a chicken philly (\$5.99) and, yes, a hamburger (\$4.99). You can also order fish dinners made with your choice of catfish, tilapia, ocean perch or whiting as well as chicken wings.

We stopped in for lunch and started with a Mazza Combination appetizer platter (\$10.99), consisting of hummus, baba ghanouj, two stuffed grape leaves, three falafel patties, a sprinkling of Feta cheese and pita bread. Of this array, I found the falafel and grape leaves particularly good. The falafel patties, often overcooked and dry, were crisp but pleasingly moist and flavorful at the center. And the grape leaves, stuffed with finely ground beef and rice with seasonings, had a hearty, smoky taste. The eggplant-based baba ghanouj was refreshingly tart and, though I would have preferred a little more garlic, the hummus was whipped to an almost creamy consistency. Everything was fresh and tasted made from scratch.

We followed up these familiar appetizers with a variation on a standard Mediterranean theme.

Al Basha offers a hot or extra spicy version of the Gyros Sandwich (\$6.99), a large pita pouch stuffed with flakes of rotisserie lamb mixed with grilled onions and a Greek raita, or cucumber yogurt-type sauce. In this case, the meltingly tender, bite-size flakes of lamb were infused with a bright orange hue thanks to having been marinated in a kind of chili sauce. The meat carried a delicious burn that echoed through the cool raita. This was gyros with



PHOTO BY MARK LEE

Al Basha's Mazza Combination appetizer platter (\$10.99).

a difference. If you love wings, you ought to give this sandwich a try.

My companion opted for the Spicy Chicken Ragin sandwich (\$5.99). Here was a juicy pile of shredded chicken tenders sautéed with onions, green peppers, tomatoes and mushrooms, then topped with mozzarella cheese and a spicy chili sauce, and served on a soft sandwich roll. Taken together, the ingredients made for a robust, rather creamy mouthful, with some heat around the edges.

Al Basha has a nifty way of taking familiar Mediterranean dishes for a spicy spin. If you're looking for fresh and simple dishes with a kick, check it out. ■

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BY RITA KOHN



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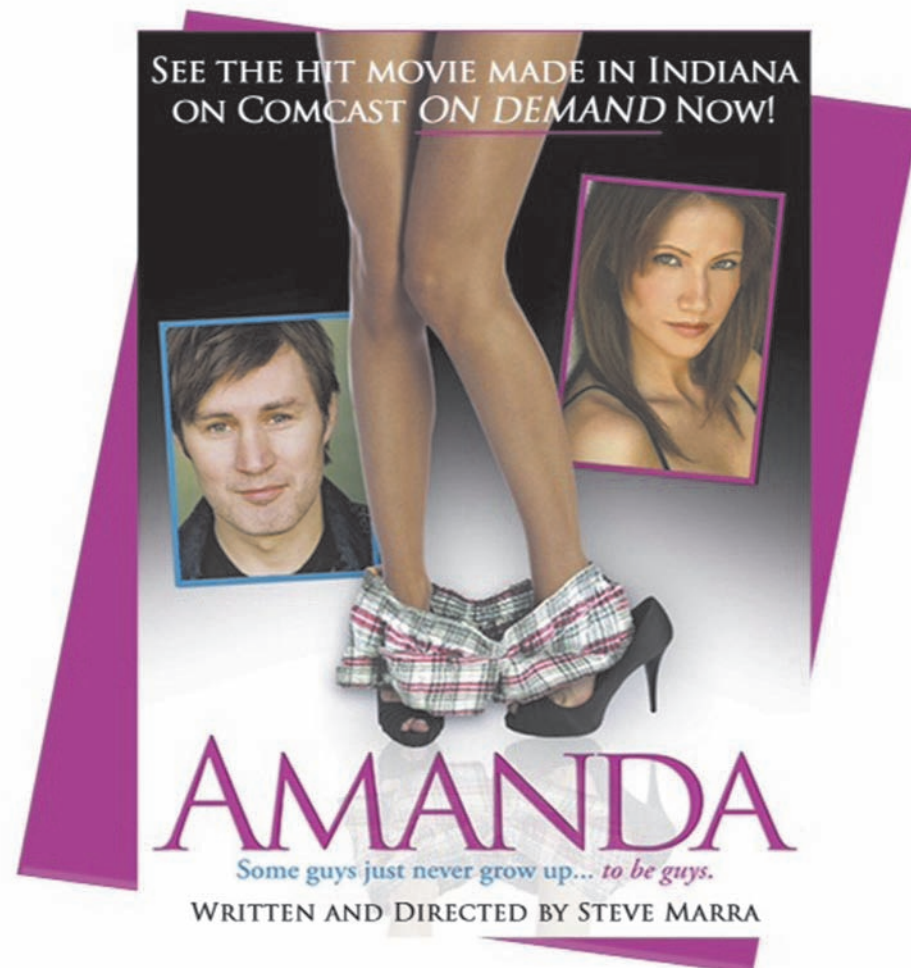
Patrick's Kitchen, 47 Boone Village Center, Zionsville, featuring these Indiana brews: Bloomington Brewing Company's "B-town," People's "Hop Killa IPA;" Flat 12 "Amber Ale" and "Half Cycle."

BREW NEWS:

Jon Myers, owner/brewer, Powerhouse Brewing Company in Columbus, IN is "going behind bars for a good cause: Muscular Dystrophy Association." By April 13 visit: <https://www.joinmda.org/columbuslockup2011/jonphbc>. Click on the icon that says: "Click here to help me make my goal" [\$1,300 for a child's summer camp]

Heartland Distillers has launched a monthly email newsletter with recipes for their Indiana Vodka, Indiana Infusions and Prohibition Gin. To subscribe, email stuart@heartlanddistillers.com.

Dark Lord Day 2011 on Saturday, April 30 is sold out. Details at www.threefloyds.com.



If you have an item for Beer Buzz, send an email at least two weeks in advance to beerbuzz@nuvo.net

The Elephant in the Living Room

BY DERRICK CARNES
EDITORS@NUVO.NET

★★★★☆ (NR)

You don't have to go to Africa to see a lion, " says Tim Harrison, an Ohio policeman and animal rescue expert. "You don't have to go to Canada to see a bear. You go to Anywhere, USA, and those animals will be there."

Harrison says that he used to receive around six animal rescue calls per year. Since the reality TV boom of the '90s — which brought personalities like Steve Erwin and Jeff Corwin into the American living room — his calls rose to about 100 per year. *The Elephant in the Living Room* shows us that these lions, tigers and bears might be living closer to home than you might imagine.

Directed by documentary-newbie Michael Webber, the film examines the issue of exotic animal ownership, in which

the likes of Bengal tigers and Amazonian pythons are kept as domesticated pets.

Webber centers his narrative on a pair of Ohio men who give each side of this argument a truly personal perspective. Tim Harrison is one of them, and he makes his position clear. While sympathetic to the folks who love their "wild" animals (he sheltered several abandoned cougars who were in between homes), he thinks that owning them should be illegal. It's a potential danger not only to human beings, but to the animals themselves.

Terry Brumfield is on the other side of the argument, an endearing fellow whose own lion cub helped him cope with depression following a serious injury in a tractor accident. He named it Lambert. With his shaggy head of hair and his wild beard, Brumfield is a lovable Cowardly Lion himself. He understands that owning Lambert may be dangerous, but Lambert's healthy and is Brumfield's only marker of happiness amid bouts of serious depression.

Despite their differences, Harrison and Brumfield share moments of camaraderie — while looking in on Lambert's cage, they see that his female counterpart, Lacie, has had cubs. No more arguments, no more fights, only the smiles of the two men as they are at their core: animal lovers.

Sleek and technically proficient, the film trades clever graphics and animated pie



SUBMITTED PHOTO

'The Elephant in the Living Room' explores the controversial subject of exotic animal ownership.

charts for heartfelt conversations and intelligent debates. *The Elephant in the Living Room* starts strong and ends stronger, growing more complex as it trucks along, all the while asking: Is exotic wildlife ownership an

animal problem, or a people problem?

Premieres at the RAVE – Metropolis 18 in Plainfield, IN, on Friday, April 1. For more information and show times, visit www.theelephantinthelivingroom.com. ■



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Sucker Punch

BY ED JOHNSON-OTT
EJOHNSONOTT@NUVO.NET

★☆☆☆☆ (R)

What a turgid, ugly, endurance test. Zack Snyder, director of *300*, *Watchmen* and the next *Superman* movie, is the man behind *Sucker Punch*, coming up with the story, co-writing the screenplay and directing the film.

He is to blame.

I could spell out the surreal layers of the action/fantasy's set-up for you, but it all boils down to this: Five attractive women team up to fight enemy warriors on a series of computer-generated battle-grounds. The landscapes are variants of the same drably apocalyptic video game motif. No plot, just levels. Uninspired. Enervating. Offensively vacant.

To have any chance of selling this kind of visual crud, you need big, bold characters and *Sucker Punch* doesn't offer any. The women, played by Emily Browning, Abbie Cornish, Jena Malone, Vanessa Hudgens and Jamie Chung, are uninteresting. Thanks to bad dialogue, any attempt at developing a meaningful character is quelled.

Snyder's music man Tyler Bates attempts to give the fight scenes an epic feel by pummeling the audience with loud, incessant mash-ups based on some great pop and rock songs, including Eurythmics' "Sweet Dreams (Are Made of This)" and Jefferson Airplane's "White Rabbit," but his efforts just made me long to hear the originals.

Before I wrap this up, I want to make two things clear. First, I have enjoyed some of Snyder's work, so don't mistake this for an anti-Snyder rant. Second, I'm giving *Sucker Punch* one star because we stopped giving out zero star ratings. This movie has no redeeming features. ■

FILM CLIPS

The following are reviews of films currently playing in Indianapolis area theaters. Reviews are written by Ed Johnson-Ott (EJO) unless otherwise noted.

LIMITED RUN

THE BANFF MOUNTAIN FILM FESTIVAL (NR)

The Banff Mountain Film Festival is one of largest, most prestigious mountain film festivals in the world. This year's tour features a collection of the most inspiring action, environmental, and adventure films from the festival held annually in Banff, Alberta, Canada. Traveling to exotic landscapes and remote cultures, and bringing audiences up-close and personal with adrenaline-packed actions sports, this year's tour is an exhilarating exploration of the mountain world. Presented by IU Outdoor Adventures, April 2 & 3, at 7 p.m., at the Buskirk-Chumley Theater in Bloomington. Admission is \$10 with an IU Student ID, \$15 for the public, and free for children under 5. Visit <http://inu.indiana.edu/uoa> for more info.

CARBON NATION (NR)

If you're tired of the preachy, partisan documentary pictures, this one might be for you. *Carbon Nation* is Peter Byck's feature-length documentary about climate change, delivered with an optimistic and witty emphasis on the solutions, rather than the just the problems. Forget the blame and the guilt of past climate change debates — *Carbon Nation* is a film that celebrates information, problem solving, inspiration and action. Premiering in Franklin on April 5, at 7 p.m., in the Richardson Chapel on the Franklin College campus. Admission is free.

DIVE! LIVING OFF AMERICA'S TRASH (NR)

Filmmaker Jeremy Seifert looks at the world of dumpster diving and exposes the enormous amount of food thrown away in America every day. If people are starving, why do grocery stores throw food away as it nears its expiration date, rather than giving it to someone who can use it? Watch Seifert and his friends as they gather meat, fruits, vegetables and other food from dumpsters outside grocery stores, risking arrest for trying to make sure unused food doesn't go to waste. Premiering at the Epworth United Methodist Church (6450 Allisonville Road), April 1, at 7 p.m. Admission is free; donations will be accepted.

MY RUN (NR) ★★☆☆☆

After losing his wife to breast cancer and struggling to raise three children on his own, Terry Hitchcock seized an idea: run 75 consecutive marathons on 75 consecutive days to bring attention to the incredibly difficult lives of single-parent families. He ran in spite of freezing rain and unbearable heat, in spite of chest pains and bone fractures that wracked his 57-year-old body. Strengthening an unbreakable bond between father and son, he ran until he made his way from Minnesota to the finish line in Georgia. Premieres March 31, at 7 p.m., at AMC Castleton Square 14 and UA Galaxy Stadium 14 in Indianapolis. For ticket prices and all premiere locations, visit www.myrunmovie.com — Derrick Carnes

SOURCE CODE PG-13

Captain Colter Stevens (Jake Gyllenhaal) is part of a mission to find the bomber of a Chicago commuter train. He's part of a government experiment called the "Source Code" that enables him to cross over into another man's identity in the last eight minutes of his life. Sounds screwy, but the ads look good. 127 minutes. See Ed's review on nuvo.net on Friday.

OPENING

"THE SCARIEST MOVIE IN DECADES!"
-Ed Douglas, COMINGSOON.net

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LMFAO are an electro-rap duo from Los Angeles, CA, who made their major-label debut in 2008. Comprised of producers, DJs, and clothing designers Sky Blu and Redfoo, LMFAO worked the club circuit for years before making their major-label debut in 2008 with the single "I'm in Miami B*tch," a song inspired by their first experience at the Winter Music Conference. In the wake of the single's release on Interscope Records, LMFAO toured the American club circuit and prepared their full-length album debut featuring "SHOTS!" and "Party Rock Anthem."

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The Wood Brothers

An acoustic jam band

BY SCOTT HALL
MUSIC@NUVO.NET

Thursday at Radio Radio, you can see a band jam, but it won't necessarily be a jam band. The Southern roots sound of the Wood Brothers, led by guitarist-vocalist Oliver Wood, bears little resemblance to the jazzy grooves and improv of his bassist brother Chris's other trio, Medeski, Martin & Wood.

As heard on their forthcoming album, *Smoke Ring Halo*, the Wood Brothers are all about tight songs and an unvarnished, semi-acoustic but potent blend of rock, folk, country, blues, funk, soul, gospel and, not least of all, engaging wordplay.

The title track, with its horns and organ, evokes the classic air of The Band as Oliver sings:
*Bet your heart was an ice cube last night
Just chilling your whiskey blood
Putting your mind way out of sight, and
that's OK*

'Cause you got a smoke ring halo that just won't blow away

The brothers grew up in Colorado, with Oliver the elder by four years. Both loved music, and they collaborated a bit in younger days.

"There were a couple years there, in my late teens and his early teens," Oliver recalls, "when we were proficient enough to sit down and play together with a four-track recorder and write little ditties and tunes."

Upon coming of age, however, they set off in different directions. Oliver headed for Atlanta to soak up more of his preferred sounds, eventually fronting the blues-rock band King Johnson through the release of five albums. Chris went to New York and fell into the avant-garde jazz scene in Manhattan and Brooklyn, where he connected with John Medeski and Billy Martin and formed an instrumental trio that somehow became a favorite of Phish fans.

Eventually, however, the brothers reconnected to do a little recording, liked what they heard, and ended up releasing a live EP in 2005. Signing with Blue Note Records for two acclaimed albums, 2006's *Ways Not to Lose* and 2008's *Loaded*, they grew their familial side project into a full-time concern.

"We had these sort of parallel music paths for, gosh, like 15 years, before we even started playing together again, so it was kind of cool how it worked out," Oliver says. "It seems like we're coming from such different places, but if you look at our iPods, we both have Ray Charles and Charles Mingus and Miles Davis and Muddy Waters and just the roots of everything – African music, Latin music."

One way or another, many of those influences factor into *Smoke Ring Halo*, the Wood Brothers' third studio release and one of the first on roots-rocker Zac Brown's new Southern

Ground Records label. Brown contributes some backing vocals to the album, which also benefits from organ work by Medeski and a horn section of top Atlanta session players.

Oliver handles most of the lead vocals, with a gritty tenor that falls somewhere between Van Morrison and the Black Crowes' Chris Robinson. Chris Wood – in addition to playing upright bass and harmonica – sings the occasional lead and lots of close harmony, in that way that only a sibling can.

Opening cut "Mary Anna" is a boisterous tale of love growing cold that packs a series of tempo and meter changes into 3½ minutes. Following in short order are "Shoofly Pie," a slide-guitar rocker; "Pay Attention," a soaring gospel-style number; and "Stumbled In," a sly ode to debauchery with the junkyard orchestra sound of Tom Waits.

Despite the guest contributions, the band is a trio at heart, and even that represents an evolution from previous albums and tours. Several months before starting work on the new release, the Wood Brothers made the strategic decision to add a drummer to their standard live lineup.

"Up until the last year or so, we'd really been just a duo, so even though our earlier albums had some drums on them, we wrote and toured as just the two of us, and the drummers were basically session drummers," Oliver explains. "We're actually a three-piece band on the road now, and that's the way we recorded the album, as we would play it live with three people. So I feel like this album is more cohesive, in that it sounds like a band."

The drummer in question was Tyler Greenwell, who has since been hired away by Derek Trucks. Drummer Jano Rix is keeping time on the current tour. Chris sticks with stand-up bass and harp, and Oliver divides his time between electric and acoustic guitar.

In another first for the band, *Smoke Ring Halo* was produced, engineered and mixed by Jim Scott, known for his studio work with Wilco, Tom Petty, Johnny Cash and a long list of rock, pop, metal and country acts since the mid-'80s.

"He was a real inspiration, a real old-school guy as far as technology goes," Oliver says. "He's been through generations of music production and just knows everything about it, and how to blend the old things with the new things. He really understood what we were doing, and he understood what it was supposed to sound like."

The two Wood Brothers share songwriting credits on the album, and indeed their writing process grows more collaborative as time goes on, Oliver says. He also notes that the mood of the new disc is lighter than their previous work, as exemplified by the party atmosphere of the opening songs. The brothers' first album, he recalls, was recorded in the wake of a divorce, and the second release followed the death of their mother.

"Those were really different times in my life and our lives," he says. "The writing was a lot more serious and solemn. There's some of that on this new record, but for me personally, I've been in a really good place the last couple years, so it's just a different feeling." ■



PHOTO BY TAYLOR CROTHERS

Smoke Ring Halo, the latest album by The Wood Brothers — Oliver (left) and Chris — is one of the first on roots-rocker Zac Brown's new label, Southern Ground Records.

"We had these sort of parallel music paths for, gosh, like 15 years, before we even started playing together again, so it was kind of cool how it worked out."

— Oliver Wood, lead guitarist-vocalist



THE WOOD BROTHERS WITH SETH WALKER

Radio Radio. 1119 E. Prospect St., Thursday, March 31, 8 p.m., \$15, 21+

Das Racist

Calling you out

INTERVIEW BY DANIELLE LOOK
MUSIC@NUVO.NET

The guys in the Brooklyn-based, art-rap trio Das Racist aren't afraid to speak their mind. Take the title track to their 2010 album, *Sit Down, Man*, which sees one of the group's emcees, Ashok Kondabolu, calling out cultural and political figures — Robert Mugabe, Carlos Mencia, Glenn Beck, Toby Keith, Rand Paul — that he'd like to see disappear from the nation's consciousness. Or "Fake Patois," which chastises non-Jamaican artists such as Jay-Z, Miss Cleo and Jim Carrey who have performed with a stereotyped, Jamaican accent.

At the same time, Das Racist can throw quite the party at a live show. They got their start, after all, with the pot-infused silliness that was 2008's "Combination Pizza Hut and Taco Bell," in which emcees Victor Vazquez and Himanshu Suri, supposedly on cell phones, trade identical lines ad infinitum — "I'm at the Pizza Hut, I'm at the Taco Bell / I'm at the combination Pizza Hut and Taco Bell" — before realizing that they might not be at the same Pizza Hut/Taco Bell. They may be serious about their politics, but they're also sensitive to the absurdity of our chain-malled American landscape.

Below, Vazquez (a.k.a. Kool A.D.) talks with NUVO via email about his group's latest album and his approach to performing live.

NUVO: Once upon a time, the members of Das Racist were on the typical "go to school, get a real job" career path.

VICTOR VAZQUEZ: My old band Boy Crisis got signed in 2008; that was the last time I had a "real" job. Didn't really seriously consider music as a career until it was my career.

NUVO: A lot of super-producers (Diplo, Boi-1da, Scoop Deville, Devo Springsteen and Dame Grease) worked on your last mixtape. What made you venture away from the heavily-sampled format of *Shut Up, Dude* to the epic list of producers that you enlisted for *Sit Down, Man*?

VAZQUEZ: We had an investor for the second one, so we could afford to buy beats, and our manager at the time, Le'roy Benros, hooked us up with Boi-1da, Scoop, Devo and Dame Grease.

NUVO: What was it like working with Diplo?

VAZQUEZ: It was all via e-mail. Never met the guy 'til a few months ago actually. He's a fun dude. He looks like a professional snowboarder.

NUVO: You guys are advocates for social-media, are you not? What kind of connections have you made through Twitter — both professional and personal?

VAZQUEZ: I tweeted at Jenny Holzer but she never hit me back.

NUVO: People make a pretty big deal of your lyrics and their potential to offend listeners. Do you think you're offending listeners?

VAZQUEZ: Maybe. I don't know.



PHOTO BY BECK ANDERSON
Das Racist — from left, Victor Vazquez, Ashok Kondabolu and Himanshu Suri — lounge about.

NUVO: Do you care if you're offending listeners?

VAZQUEZ: It depends on which listeners, I guess.

NUVO: How do your political viewpoints inform your work?

VAZQUEZ: The richest two percent of the world owns half the world's wealth. The richest 10 percent owns 85 percent of the world's wealth. 1.4 million kids die per year of curable diseases. There's enough food on earth to feed all six billion or so of us twice but one out of every eight people on earth is starving. The US has spent over a trillion dollars in Iraq and Afghanistan, where thousands of American soldiers (mostly poor) have died and an estimated million or so Iraqis and Afghanis have died. Our dependence on oil is poisoning the oceans, destroying the atmosphere and countless fragile ecosystems and is perpetuating mass violence and economic disparity. I'm not sure what use there is in making music aside from the fact that it's paying my rent right now.

NUVO: What is your ultimate goal when giving people a concert?

VAZQUEZ: I guess I want people to have fun or at least not be mad at us for taking their money.

NUVO: How was SXSW? Any interesting events or stories to share?

VAZQUEZ: [fellow bandmate] Heems got drunk and fell off the stage and Mexican metablogger Carlos of Hipsterrunoff.com wrote a deadpan, post-sarcastic blog entry about it with intentional misspellings. That band Trash Talk is fun.

NUVO: What's currently on your plate? Are you working on any new projects?

VAZQUEZ: We're working on an album called *RELAX* that we'll sell for money. ■

DAS RACIST WITH ANDY D, ACTION JACKSON, GABBY LOVE
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JUN. 30 - LOS LONELY BOYS



Julian Lage

Wednesday

INDIE

HERE WE GO MAGIC, TAMMAR, DOUG

Radio Radio, 1119 E. Prospect St., 9 p.m., \$8, 21+ Here We Go Magic's Luke Temple doesn't have the strongest voice; it's reedy, over-reaching and fails to add much to his dreamy, psychedelic indie-rock arrangements, which tend to sound bedroom-recorded even when they're executed with a full band. But as long as the voice doesn't bother much, Here We Go Magic makes music that's pretty easy to bliss out to, and that's in the dense, multi-layered mode of Animal Collective and Grizzly Bear (if a little bit shy of the brilliance of those groups).

JAZZ

JULIAN LAGE GROUP

The Jazz Kitchen, 5377 N. College Ave. 7 and 9 p.m., \$15, 21+

Acoustic guitarist Julian Lage grew up fast, performing with Carlos Santana at age 8, the same year that he was the subject of an Academy Award nominated documentary short, *Julian at Eight*. As the years went by, he crafted a genre-surfing sound — a 2009 release, *Sounding Point*, includes experiments in bluegrass, blues, straight-ahead jazz and contemporary classical, including the reflective, ECM-ish, "Quiet, Through and Through."

ROCK

GENE LOVES JEZEBEL

Rock House Café, 3940 S. Keystone Ave., 7 p.m., 21+ Hard rock and metal fans should keep an eye on the Rock House Café, the far southside venue that's maintaining a steady weekend schedule featuring local acts and nostalgia bands still working the circuit. This week, the venue hosts Gene Loves Jezebel, the Wales-born, goth-rock band founded by identical twin brothers Michael and Jay Aston that enjoyed some chart success throughout the '80s (including the surprising parting shot, "Jealous," which broke through to alt-rock radio in 1990 just before the band's breakup). Michael and Jay finally got sick of seeing the other's doppelganger every night, and each has now leads a separate touring version of Gene Loves Jezebel. The incarnation led by Michael Aston will stop by the Rock House.

Thursday

ACOUSTIC

THE WOOD BROTHERS

Radio Radio, 1119 E. Prospect St., 8 p.m., \$15, 21+ See feature, pg. 26.

GOSPEL

THE WELCOME WAGON, LIZ JANES

Trinity Church, 6151 Central Ave. 7 p.m., \$10 door, all ages To be sure, not everything released on Asthmatic Kitty Records is produced by Sufjan Stevens, who co-founded the label. But Stevens did play a huge

SOUNDCHECK



The Welcome Wagon

PHOTO BY JIMMY KATZ

part in putting together debut releases by local singer-songwriter Liz Janes and the husband-and-wife gospel duo The Welcome Wagon, in placing those artists' bedroom and family room recordings into dense, often-playful, chamber-pop arrangements. Led by a Presbyterian minister and his wife, The Welcome Wagon sings sacred music from across the generations, including Old Testament psalms set to music, Protestant hymns and more recent material, such as a surprisingly soulful take on Danielson's "Sold! To the Nice Rich Man." Janes will perform an opening solo set and lead a local choir that will accompany The Welcome Wagon.

ROCK

QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE, THE DOUGH ROLLERS

The Vogue, 6259 N. College Ave., 8 p.m., sold out, 21+ Lead singer Josh Homme has a remarkable ability to balance several projects at once (including bands, film scores, solo projects), but his stoner rock band Queens of the Stone Age still took something of a break after the release of 2007's *Era Vulgaris* so that Homme could team up with former Queen Dave Grohl and Led Zeppelin's John Paul Jones to form the super-group Them Crooked Vultures. This year his interests lead him back to the Queens, who are rehearsing a new album that Homme called a "trancey, broken thing" when he spoke recently with *The Guardian*.

Friday

ECLECTIC

CULTURE SHOCK FEAT. GREY GRANITE, GROWING AS A SECOND GENERATION, KYLE LONG, BEANER THREAT, KNOW NO STRANGER

Athenaeum Theater, 7 p.m., \$10 donation (culturalcannibals.com), 21+ See Go and Do, pg. 16.



Beat Debris

SUBMITTED PHOTO

ECLECTIC

BEAT DEBRIS, ACCORDIONS, AMO JOY, JOE MOLINARO, ADAM KUHN, VACATION CLUB, BUFF ORPINGTON
Big Car, 1043 Virginia Ave., Ste. 215, 8 p.m., free, all ages
Big Car gets into the record business this week with the release of an LP by local, art-rock four-piece Beat Debris in a limited edition of 300, each with a unique album cover uniquely designed by a local artist. Band members have been hanging around Big Car for years — Tom Burris, who started Beat Debris as a solo project in 1992, revived his group in 2007 with a performance at Big Car’s Murphy Art Center space, and the group’s current drummer Jessica Halverson started playing with Burris at the behest of Big Car executive director Jim Walker. With a bunch of Big Car regulars, including the zither-led folk rock outfit Accordions, saccharine-sweet pop band Amo Joy and Fountain Square garage rockers Vacation Club.

HIP-HOP

DAS RACIST WITH ANDY D. ACTION JACKSON, GABBY LOVE
White Rabbit Cabaret, 1116 Prospect St.
9 p.m., sold out, 21+
See feature, pg. 27.

Saturday

ROOTS

JUNK BOX MIKE, JETHRO EASYFIELDS, MORGAN N’ TOM, AARON BUCKNER
Birdy’s, 2131 E. 71st St., 7:30 p.m., \$5, 21+
Junk Box Mike, the local singer-songwriter and sometimes host of the Open Mic at Corner Wine Bar, rounded together an all-star group of local roots musicians to play on his latest album, *From My Recliner*, including three Spudpuppies (Gary Wasson, John Gilmore, Delmar Lincoln) and John Martin, once of Sindacato. He’ll debut the results Saturday with the help of all of those collaborators, as well as a whole gaggle of guest stars (John Bowyer of the Cousin Brothers, Cara Jean Wahlers) and openers (notably, another open mic host, Jethro Easyfields).

JAM

MAX ALLEN BAND
The Mousetrap, 5565 N. Keystone Ave.
10:30 p.m., \$3, 21+
Blues and jam guitarist Max Allen is coming of f a big win: He and his band knocked of f a few other acts in the local edition of Hard Rock Café’s Battle of the Bands, which put them in the running to perform at this summer’s Hard Rock Calling festival in London’s Hyde Park. To get to London, they’ll first need to get the go-ahead from a group of industry professionals (who will winnow a current group of 14 finalists down to 10), and then to win an online competition voted on by the general public. The band debuts a new live record Saturday at the ‘Trap, and is at work on a studio album, *Everyone Thinks You’re Weird*, due this summer.

Sunday

ROOTS

POKEY LAFARGE AND THE SOUTH CITY THREE
Noble Tea & Coffee, 933 Logan St., Noblesville
2 p.m., \$15, all ages
On March 15, Third Man Records put out two singles on its Blue Series, one by locals W e Are Hex, the other by Pokey LaFarge and the South City Three, a St. Louis-based country swing outfit. With LaFarge — who has a twangy, sharp, wry voice straight from a honky-tonk 78 — leading the way, the group recorded “Pack It Up” and “Chitlin Cookin’ Time in Cheatham County” for Jack White, and will bring the results to Noblesville’s Noble Tea & Coffee, which serves as a sort of concert space for that town’s Blue Stone Folk School, an outfit devoted to keeping alive the kind of traditional music so dear to LaFarge and his cohorts.

ROOTS

OLD 97S, TEDDY THOMPSON
The Vogue, 6259 N. College Ave.
8 p.m., \$18 door (plus applicable fees), \$20 door, 21+
The stalwart alt-country band is on the road behind October 2010’s *The Grand Theatre, Vol. 1*, which, despite the title, is not actually a live album: The Dallas-based group rehearsed for recording sessions at their hometown’s Sons of Hermann Hall, but actually laid down tracks at Austin’s Texas Treefort Studio, meaning that a Grand Theatre was never involved. Still, the record sounds more energetic, loose and lively than the Old 97’s recent efforts, which may have suffered because lead singer Rhett Miller has been splitting time between his long-lived full band and his solo career. Miller’s boldest move on the record is his reworking of Dylan’s “Desolation Row” as “Champaign, Illinois” (“Oh then if you die fearin’ God and painfully employed / No, you will not go to Heaven / You’ll go to Champaign, Illinois”).

Tuesday

ROCK

ELECTRIC SIX, THE CONSTELLATIONS, ANDY D
Birdy’s, 2131 E. 71st St.
8 p.m., \$12 (plus applicable fees), 21+
An over-the-top dance-rock band with a hit-and-miss sense of humor, the Detroit-based sextet Electric Six has been playing the region for the better part of the decade, making it to the UK charts in 2003 with a hit, “Danger! High Voltage,” that was rumored to feature vocals by then-neighbor Jack White, and mining the same glam-rock-from-a-Detroit-garage vein ever since, with less commercial success but plenty of inspired moments, including “Clusterfuck,” from 2010’s *Zodiac*, which opens with the convincingly crooned lines: “In the writings of the Druids / Lies a recipe for Druid fluid / Sounds like a most refreshing drink to me.”

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REVIEW



Black Milk

PHOTO BY ANDERTON LEAF PHOTOGRAPHY

WEDNESDAY

J. DILLA TRIBUTE

The Jazz Kitchen, March 23

Originally scheduled for February 2 but postponed because of the ice storm, the Jazz Kitchen finally played host March 23 to the J Dilla Tribute show. The event expanded in the interim: Detroit emcee Black Milk was added as headliner, and a private informational presentation about the Red Bull Music Academy was tacked on to the beginning of the night.

The show is an annual tribute to the late, legendary hip-hop producer J Dilla, who, in his scant 32 years on earth, reshaped entire genres through both his solo instrumental work and his production for artists such as Common, Busta Rhymes and A Tribe Called Quest, among many others.

A private presentation, "How to Apply For the Red Bull Music Academy," preceded the concert itself. The academy offers an ongoing series of music workshops staged in a different location each session, the next of which is scheduled for later this year in Tokyo. Each year 60 musicians are selected for the program, which began in 1998, and past lecturers have included ?uestlove, Tiga, Biz Markie, King Jammy and Bob Moog.

As the *Seattle Times* put it in 2005: "It's less a music academy than an artists collective, with a very generous, very wealthy Santa Claus (played by Red Bull) footing the bill."

Several members of the audience raised their hands when asked who had already filled out the 17-page handwritten application for the Academy, which also sponsored the concert.

"This is an investment in your career," the Academy's Indiana representative Nick Saligoe, aka DJ Metrognome, told the small audience. "No one from Indiana has been selected before."

After a short video presentation, Larry Mizzel Jr., a columnist for *The Stranger* and KEXP radio host, led an extensive Q

and A session with Black Milk.

During the interview, Black Milk said he treasured the short amount of time he spent working with the late producer.

"I never got a chance to ask him advice about making beats," he said. "Only a few cats got to sit in that room and see him create."

The tribute show itself got started a half-hour later, when The Native Sun band took the stage. A rolling cast of singers and MCs fronted the group during the set, paying tribute to both J Dilla and the artists with whom he worked.


F.I.R.E. and Son of Thought took the stage first, demonstrating fantastic stage presence and chemistry with one another, followed by another duo, Mr. Kinetik and Rusty Redenbacher, that was just as adept in working the crowd. Other highlights were Jaecyn Bayne's intricate, a capella freestyle on his love for cannabis and Alpha's interpretation of DOOM's Dilla-produced track, "Gazzillion Ear."

The penultimate song of the tight, funky set featured every MC making his way to the stage at once to take turns freestyling over a live interpretation of J Dilla's classic grooves.

The Native Sun band and accompanying MCs were solid, but things really got moving once the stage was cleared and instruments switched out for Black Milk and his backing band. The band warmed the crowd up while Black Milk rapped the opening song using a cordless microphone backstage. The MC then burst on the scene, spitting rhymes furiously and clutching a soon-to-be sweat-drenched towel.

The entire packed house was tuned to the same vibration, and several audience members could be seen rapping along to every word of the show. When Black Milk's set ended several audience members begged for an encore, which came in the form of one last song, followed by a full-band instrumental freak-out.

—ROB BURGESS
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what you missed...



PHOTO BY STACY KAGIWADA

NYC anti-folk dude Paleface regales the White Rabbit Cabaret crowd with an anti-story about anti-stuff, accompanied by his girlfriend Mo on the drums.

DISC-US

JEREMIAH COSNER HOLD STEADY EP

★★★★☆

Full of sly attitude and nods to The Faces and The Black Crowes, Indianapolis rock singer/songwriter Jeremiah Cosner's four-song *Hold Steady* EP gets grinding from the beginning, with the slide guitar and cracking drum that open the opening track, "Lipstick and Cigarettes." The sneer and drawl of lyrics like "she knows what it takes to get this party rocking" give the tune — and the album — a certain Stony accessibility, and there's enough space in the mix for the rock to breath. Musically clean without being too shiny, the sound is not unlike the mid-80's LA rock of David & David ("Welcome to the Boomtown"); it's pop/rock for 2011 channeled through 1989.

"Moneymaker" is a bit of blooz with a piano, crunchy power chords, a wank-ish guitar solo and some strong acoustic guitar underpinning. It's reminiscent of post-Baby's John Waite, circa "Change". And that's good John Waite, if you need to know.



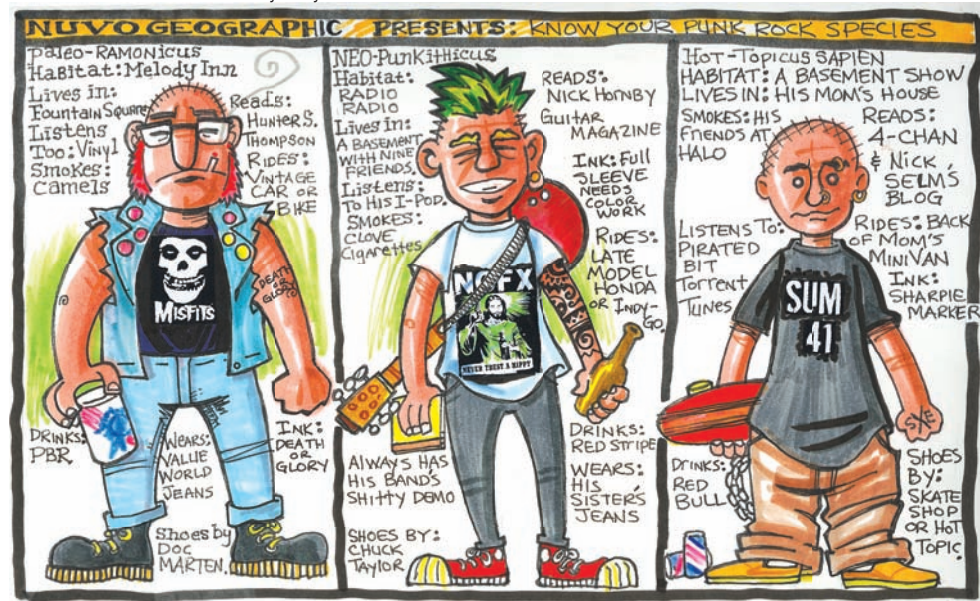
"Spinning Away" mines the same sonic openness, again with an acoustic piano and Hammond B3 blend to introduce it. As with the other songs, Cosner has the talent to write memorable lines, like "Spinning Away's" seemingly simple "chemicals that make us collide."

"Coney Island" is a strong closer, with a snapping bass groove and lyrics like "San Francisco turned into disco / Turned myself around and came on home" that help the song resonate after it has finished playing.

All in all, it's an intriguing introduction to Cosner, who graduated from Indiana University's School of Music in 2007. The project makes you think he could do some fun damage with a full-length album of songs; it's the stuff that WTTs should love. His swagger seems in place, as is the understanding of how to take musical influences and meld them into your own rock and roll sound.

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NEWS OF THE WEIRD

Piss-feud between profs

Plus, a drug called whoonga

BY CHUCK SHEPHERD

The Feral Professor: Tihomir Petrov, 43, a mathematics professor at California State University Northridge, was charged in January with misdemeanors for allegedly urinating twice on the office door of a colleague with whom he had been feuding. (Petrov was identified by a hidden camera installed after the original puddles turned up.) Petrov is the author of several scholarly papers, with titles such as "Rationality of Moduli of Elliptic Fibrations With Fixed Monodromy."

Can't possibly be true

• Gangs in Durban, South Africa, have recently begun stealing expensive anti-retroviral (ARV) drugs destined for AIDS patients and using them in the country's most popular street drug, "whoonga," a highly addictive, smoked cocktail of detergent, rat poison,

marijuana and the ARVs. The crisis was reported by KwaZulu-Natal province drug-abuse organizations and Durban police, who stood by their claims despite attempts by South African president Jacob Zuma to assure international suppliers of ARVs that more were needed and that none were being diverted for whoonga.

• Somehow, prison inmates finagled \$39 million in undeserved federal tax refunds in 2009, according to a February report by the U.S. Treasury Department's inspector general for tax administration. In Key West, Fla., for example, where prisoner Danilo Suarez was sentenced in January to five years in prison for filing multiple fraudulent returns, jailers discovered a pass-around sheet of instructions for false filings. While some refunds were legitimate (e.g., on pre-incarceration investment activity), the IRS was found to conduct fraud screenings on fewer than half of all returns filed by prisoners. (The IRS complained that, until 2008, it was illegal for the agency to share information with state corrections officials — or even with the Federal Bureau of Prisons.)

• State law in Tennessee prohibits registered sex offenders from re-contacting their victims, but there is no such restriction on anyone convicted of a sex crime before 2007, and still in prison, but who

CONTINUED ON PG. 35

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NEWS OF THE WEIRD

is not yet on the registered list. (Post-2007 sex criminals are automatically registered upon conviction.) Consequently, according to a February WMC-TV report, convicted molester Terry McConnell cannot be prevented from mailing birthday cards to one of his two pre-2007 victims (one reading, "I cannot believe my little tot-tot is already a teenager. You might be tired of me writing this, but I can't get over how fast you are growing up"). (Prison officials say their limited resources are better used on monitoring incoming mail rather than outgoing.)

• Senior Houston police officer Mike Hamby, 51, was suspended in February after witnesses reported that he, off-duty and not in uniform, had tossed a tear-gas grenade into a group of rivals in a rodeo cooking contest. Hamby has 30 years' service and was a member of his union's board of directors. About 300 teams compete in the barbecue cook-off, and police were investigating whether Hamby was merely trying to sabotage a competitor's food.

Unclear on the concept

• As is usually the case when Walmart announces the intention to build a new store, community supporters (pushing for jobs, an enlarged tax base and shopper convenience) battle community opponents (trying to save mom-and-pop retailers), and when plans were announced for a northeast Washington, D.C., location, it was the local Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner, Brenda Speaks, who produced a brand-new reason for opposing such a store. Young people, she told an anti-Walmart rally (according to a February *Washington Post* report), would be more likely to get criminal records because, with a big corporation around, they could less resist the temptation to steal.

• British drug dealer Luke Walsh-Pinnock, 22, recently released after a prison stint, threatened in February to sue police in the Kilburn neighborhood of London after officers distributed a leaflet near his mother's home warning that Walsh-Pinnock was once again free. Walsh-Pinnock said he felt "humiliated" by the leaflet, in violation of his "human rights."

The Redneck Chronicles

• (1) Timothy Walker, 48, was hospitalized in Burlington, N.C., in February after he fell off of an SUV while he was on top, holding down two mattresses for the driver, who apparently rounded a curve too fast. (2) Three people were hospitalized in Bellevue,

Wash., in January when their van stalled and then exploded as the ignition was re-engaged. They were carrying two gallons of gasoline in an open container and had been feeding the carburetor directly, through an opening in the engine housing (between the seats), as the van was in motion. (It was not reported why they were doing it that way.)

Inexplicable

• Washington, D.C., resident Nicole Pugh, arriving at her polling station in November with the sole intention of casting a vote for mayor, noticed a line on the ballot asking her choice for Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner, even though no candidates were listed. On a lark and with no knowledge of the office, she wrote in her own name, and that evening was informed that she had been elected, 1-0, to an office that had been vacant, through apathy, for the previous 14 years. Though other Advisory Neighborhood Commission positions are contested and the candidates quite active, none is paid, and they work mostly via meetings. (However, having the title can garner press attention — for example, for Brenda Speaks, commenting on the planned Walmart store, above.)

• When James Maynard arrived at the murder trial of his former long-time lover Fiona Adams, 24, in February at Britain's Nottingham Crown Court, it was supposedly in support of Adams, who was contending that she did not recklessly start a fire that blazed out of control and took the lives of two of the couple's three children. However, Maynard, in full view of a mob of reporters, was wearing a grotesque clown mask resembling the face of the character Pennywise in the Stephen King novel *It*, and he declined numerous opportunities to comment on why he was wearing it. (After a three-week trial, Adams was acquitted.)

Least competent criminals

• Elusive Perps: (1) Armed-robbery convict Edward Nathan Jr. escaped from a Florida work-release center in 1983 and, as "Claude Brooks" and other identities, managed to avoid police for the next 27 years, until he slipped up in December in Atlanta — arrested after being caught urinating in public. He was returned to Florida and charged with escape. (2) Accused thief Anthony Darwin, 30, who had successfully eluded authorities in Wisconsin since 2004, turned himself in to Sheriff Bob Spoden in Janesville in January, apparently only because he needs treatment for cancer. However,



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not wanting to pay for the expensive surgery, Spoden asked a judge to dismiss the arrest warrant and put Darwin back on the street. (Judge Alan Bates released Darwin for treatment, which will surely be paid for by the taxpayer, although perhaps not on the sheriff's account.)

Recurring themes

• The Country Afraid of Its Own Shadow: (1) Britain's Oxfordshire County Council, which oversees youth swimming classes, banned goggles from the pools in February because of the fear that kids might snap the elastic bands and hurt their eyes. (2) Malvern Primary School in Huyton, Merseyside, recently banned play with regulation soccer balls because they are made of leather. "Football," it ruled, must be played with less-dangerous sponge balls.



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DAWN!**

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DON'T MEAN THE MYSTERY OF HOW
WE CAN ALWAYS AFFORD TO SPEND
HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS
ON ANOTHER WAR WITHOUT GIVING
IT A SECOND **THOUGHT--**

--AND YET, ALLEGEDLY CANNOT
AFFORD SCHOOLTEACHERS' **SALARIES**
OR HEATING SUBSIDIES FOR THE
ELDERLY?

OH, **MOONBAT--**

--HOW DELIGHTFUL IT MUST BE,
TO LIVE INSIDE THAT STRANGE,
KALEIDOSCOPEIC WONDERLAND YOU
CALL A **BRAIN!**

NO, I WAS PURSUING THE MYSTERY
OF HOW AN EFFEMINATE DEMO-
CRAT PRESIDENT COULD DO SOME-
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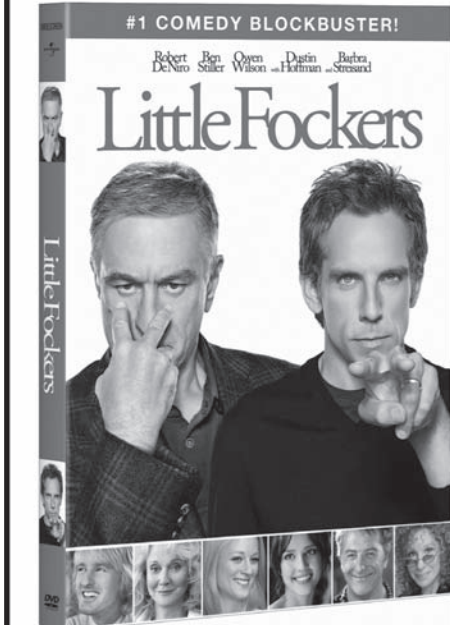
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FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

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♈ ARIES (March 21-April 19): This is an excellent time to study the book *Assholeology: The Science Behind Getting Your Way — and Getting Away with it*. In fact, the cosmos would not only look the other way if you acted on the principles described therein; the cosmos is actively encouraging you to be a successful jerk. APRIL FOOL! It's true that you're in a phase when it makes sense to be a little extra selfish and eager to bend the world to meet your needs. But according to my analysis, it's crucial that you do this politely and graciously.

♉ TAURUS (April 20-May 20): It's a great time to get breast implants, a penis enlargement, a nose enhancement (if our nose is too tiny), or surgery to elongate your tongue. Anything you could do to yourself in order to stick out further and make a bigger impression would be in harmonious alignment with the astrological omens. APRIL FOOL! Everything I just said was a dirty lie. Here are the facts: It's high time to work creatively and appreciatively with what nature has given you, not try to force it to accommodate some soulless desire.

♊ GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Between now and April 16, you really should try to party every night. You should experiment with at least 100 different altered states of consciousness, and talk to at least 500 fascinating people, and explode with at least 800 fits of laughter, and change your mind at least 1000 times. You need massive stimulation, Gemini. You need record-breaking levels of variety and mood swings. Be everywhere! Do everything! APRIL FOOL! While it's true that this might be one of those times that the visionary poet William Blake was referring to when he said, "The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom," please take care you don't end up slobbering face-down in the gutter without any pants on halfway along the road of excess. Remember the goal: to actually reach the palace of wisdom.

♋ CANCER (June 21-July 22): You have cosmic permission to brag like a coked-up pimp. You have poetic license to swagger and show off like a rock star who has sold his soul for \$30 million. You have my blessing if you'd like to act as if everyone in the world should be more like you. APRIL FOOL! I was exaggerating a little. It's true that you have every right to seize more authority and feel more confident and spread your influence farther and wider. But the best way to do that is to explore the mysteries of humble courage and ply the art of magical truth-telling and supercharge your willpower with a big dose of smart love.

♌ LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): What is your most far-fetched desire? I dare you to pursue it. What is the craving that would take you to the frontier of your understanding about yourself? I urge you to indulge it. Which of your primal wishes intimidates you as much as it enthralls you? I beg you to embrace it. APRIL FOOL! I don't really think you should try to carry out your most extreme fantasies. Maybe in a few weeks, but not now. I do hope, however, that you spend some time this week getting to know them better.

♍ VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): If you develop symptoms like a dry mouth, twitching eyebrows, sweaty palms, or goose bumps in places you don't usually get them, you may be suffering from a malady called anatidaephobia, which is the fear that you are being watched by a duck. So please, Virgo, try to avoid places where ducks congregate. APRIL FOOL! I lied. The truth is, you will not contract an exotic affliction like anatidaephobia any time soon. You may, however, notice yourself experiencing waves of seemingly irrational elation; you may frequently feel like something oddly good is about to happen. Why? Because according to my analysis of the omens, you are more likely than usual to be watched by secret admirers, future helpers, interesting strangers, and your guardian angel.

♎ LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): If you're a straight man, this would be a good time to ask Halle Berry on a date. If you're a straight woman, you'll have a better-than-usual chance to get Jake Gyllenhaal to go out with you. If you're a gay man, you might want to try your luck with Adam Lambert, and if you're a lesbian, I encourage you to propose a rendezvous with Portia de Rossi. APRIL FOOL! I lied. It's never a good time to try to hook up with unavailable dream girls or dream guys. I will say this, though: You now have extraordinary power to turn yourself into a better partner, ally, and lover. And that suggests it's well within your means to cultivate a more exciting kind of intimacy.

♏ SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): "Dear Rob: I just walked in on my boyfriend of over a year in bed with another woman. My mind is beyond blown; it's a splay of sparks in a drenched sky, a fireworks display in a downpour. Any advice on moving forward? Shocked Scorpio." Dear Shocked: I'll tell you what I'd like to tell all Scorpions right now: Start plotting your wicked revenge. APRIL FOOL! The truth is, revenge would be a dumb waste of your precious time. Any surprises that come your way in the coming days are basically disguised gifts from life to get you back on course. Use their motivational energy wisely and gratefully.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): It's an ideal year for you to explore the intimate wonders of ecosexuality. Nature's libidinous pleasures are calling to you. How about trying some erotic experiments with trees and waterfalls? Or skinny-dipping in wetlands and doing skyclad seduction dances for the clouds? Or making out with oyster mushrooms right where they grow out of a fallen log? APRIL FOOL! It's true that this is a good time to expand your sexual repertoire and seek out new sensations of intimate bliss, but it's quite possible to accomplish that by confining your erotic communion to human beings.

♑ CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): The astrological omens are practically screaming for you to go out and buy a luxurious new home in your ideal neighborhood. Preferably it should have every feature you've ever dreamed about, whether that's a cinema-scale theater room or a spa with a sauna and hot tub. If you have to go deep into debt to make this happen, that's fine. APRIL FOOL! I lied, sort of. It is an excellent time for you to upgrade your domestic scene, either by making comfortable and attractive changes in the decor of your current home or by enhancing your relationships with your family and roommates. But there's no need to make crazy expenditures that will cripple you financially. In fact, cheap is probably better. That's what the astrological omens are really suggesting.

♒ AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): It's absolutely critical for you to be consistent and uniform right now. You must be pure, homogeneous, and regular. Don't you dare dabble with anything that's even vaguely miscellaneous. APRIL FOOL! Everything I just said was a lie. In astrological fact, the best way to thrive is by being a cross between a mishmash and a medley . . . by being part hodgepodge and part amalgamation. Your strongest impact will come from blending the most diverse influences. The best elixir will result from mixing several different potions.

♓ PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): I hope you take full advantage of this unusual moment in your astrological cycle, Pisces. According to my interpretation of the cosmic signs, it's prime time to unleash an ocean of tears. And not just the kind of moisture that wells up out of sadness, either. I hope you will give even more time to crying because of unreasonable joy, sobbing due to cathartic epiphanies, weeping out of compassion for the suffering of others, and blubbering activated by visions of the interconnectedness of all life. Let it flow! APRIL FOOL! I slightly overstated the possibilities. Yes, it will be a wonderful time to feel profound states of emotion and surrender to the tears they induce. But you need to get a few things done, too, so don't risk drowning.

Homework: Describe what you'd be like if you were the opposite of yourself. Write www.freewillastrology.com.

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